Commentary

Volume Fifty-three, Number Five, May 1972

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Martin Mayer

"The Pottinger Papers"
An Exchange on Affirmative Action

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Milton Himmelfarb

BOOKS IN REVIEW
Daniel Aaron / Jacob Korg / Alan Goldfein / Isa Kapp / Maurice Friedberg

Cynthia Ozick and Critics: Forster's Stature

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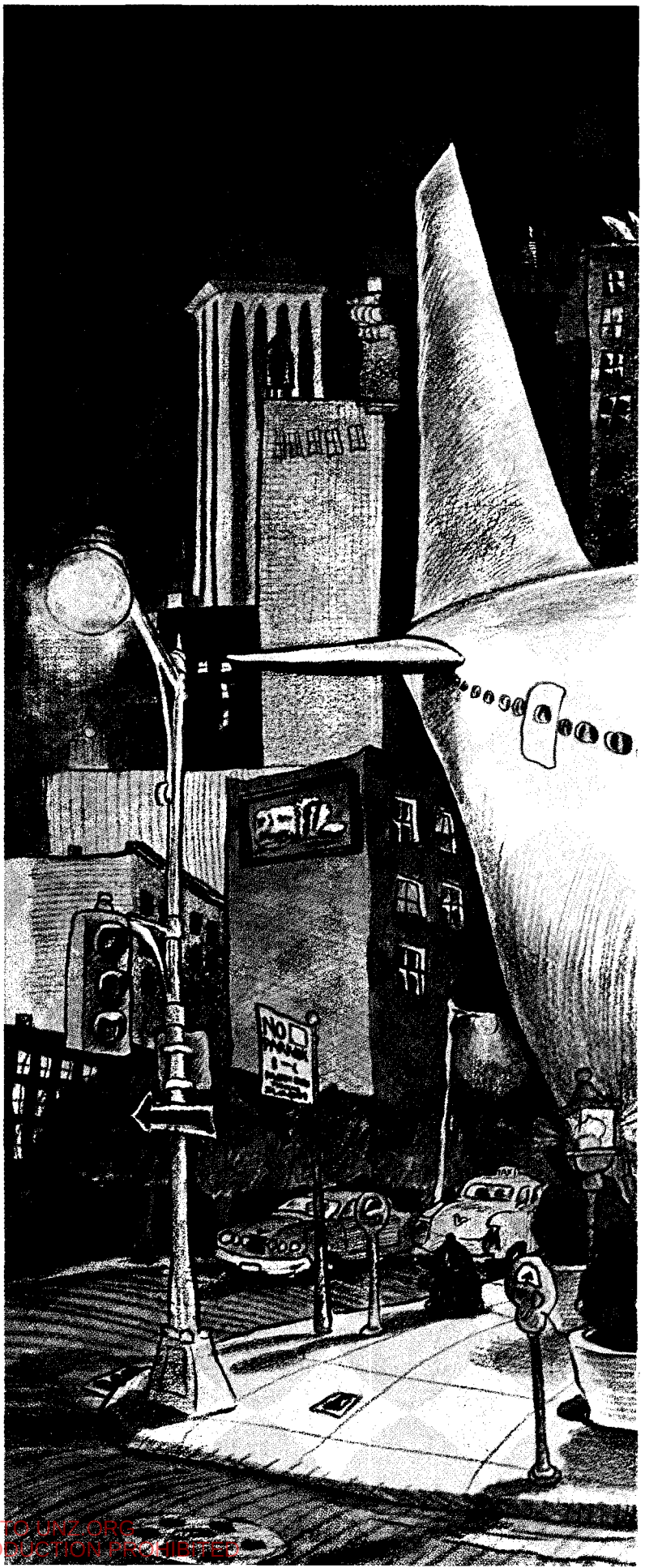

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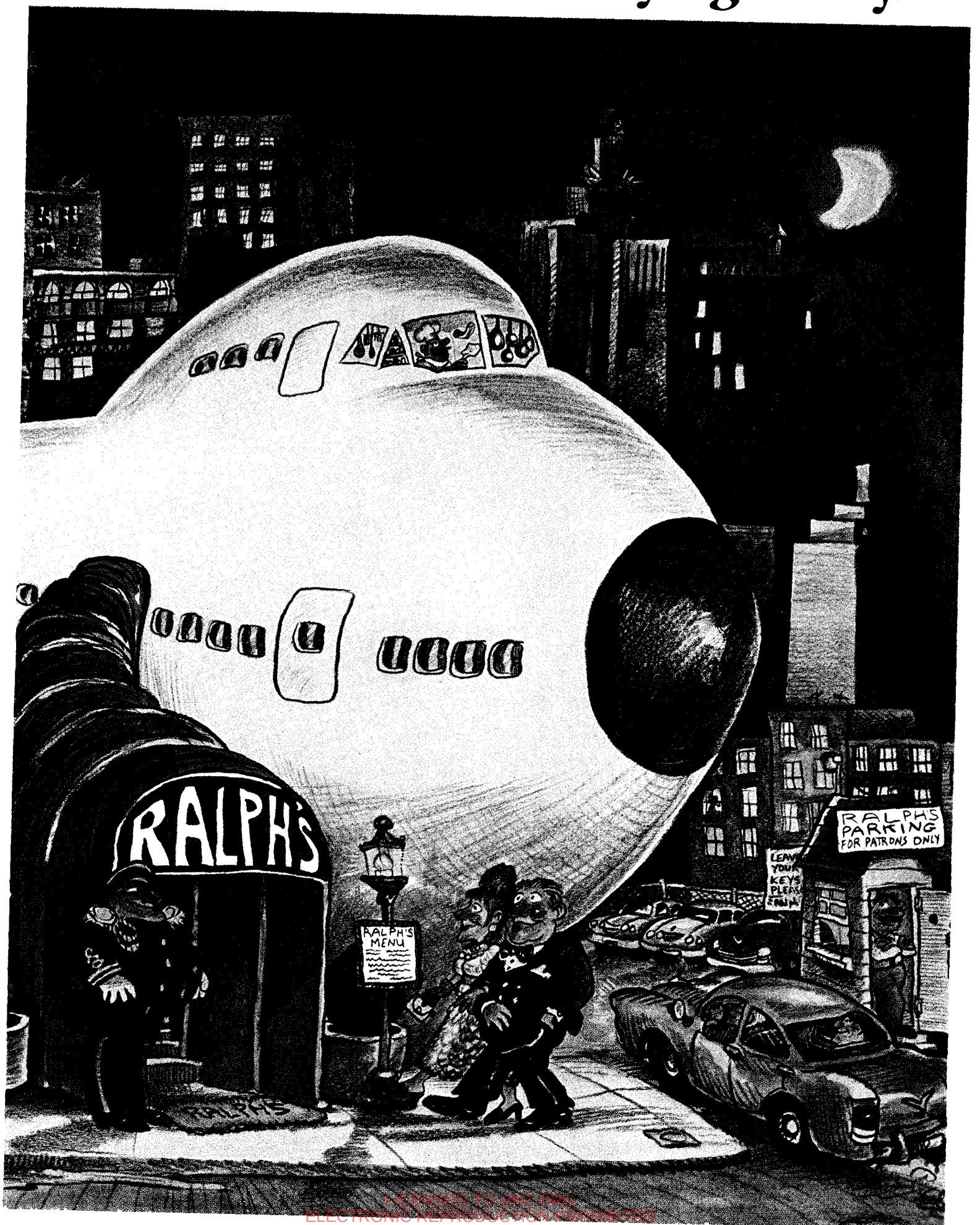

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Commentary

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Issues

Beyond ZPG

Norman Podhoretz

PARTLY because I am much more skeptical than Samuel McCracken (p. 45) about the desirability of a stabilized population, I am, if possible, even more horrified than he is by the idea of empowering the state to decide how many children shall be born. For in addition to the considerations Mr. McCracken raises in analyzing the implications of yielding such power to the state, there is the further question of whether the population controllers would be satisfied even with that. After all, the intellectual leaders of this movement are not, as Mr. McCracken notes, "*pure* population controllers," concerned only with numbers and "willing to let a stabilized or reduced population do what it wanted with the space which had been secured for it." They tend to hold strong views on the nature of the good life and most of them by their own admission would be singularly unhesitant about imposing these views on others if they were ever given the chance. This by itself is bad enough, but there is also reason to suspect that some leaders of the movement, and probably more than some, are ultimately interested in controlling the quality of life on this earth in another and deeper and more dangerous sense as well.

SEVERAL months ago, I participated in a conference in Washington called to explore the question of whether mongoloid infants should be permitted to live. Of course the organizers of the conference phrased the problem in considerably less brutal terms than I have just done, but that was essentially what we had come together—geneticists, biologists, medical men, writers, philosophers, and theologians—to discuss. Setting out for Washington, I had expected that there would be very little disagreement on the main point. To my amazement, however, I discovered that a substantial body of sentiment—substantial less in numbers than in the eminence of those, especially from the scientific community, who constituted it—was by no means willing to grant mongoloids an undisputed right to live. Such creatures, they argued, are an intolerable burden to their parents, to society, and to themselves. What then should be done about them? Although no one went quite so far as to advocate in public that they simply be put to death, there was a good deal of quiet support at the conference for what is called "negative euthanasia"—that is, refraining from the medical or surgical procedures which might be necessary to keep a mongoloid infant alive and allowing it to die instead. (Negative euthanasia is nowadays also widely proposed, and no doubt practiced, for the very old and for the incurably ill. Where such cases are concerned, the support for negative euthanasia, far from being somewhat embarrassed as it is in the case of genetically defective babies, has become very vocal, and it increases in intensity with the development of more and more effective technologies for keeping people alive while they nevertheless remain totally incapacitated.)

But if "positive" euthanasia had no public partisans at the conference, it did have a few private defenders. One very distinguished scientist, for example, told me he saw no reason why anyone who accepted abortion should balk at infanticide, particularly when the infant in question was known to be defective whereas the fetus to be aborted might be normal and sound. Hearing this, I was reminded of the old Catholic argu-

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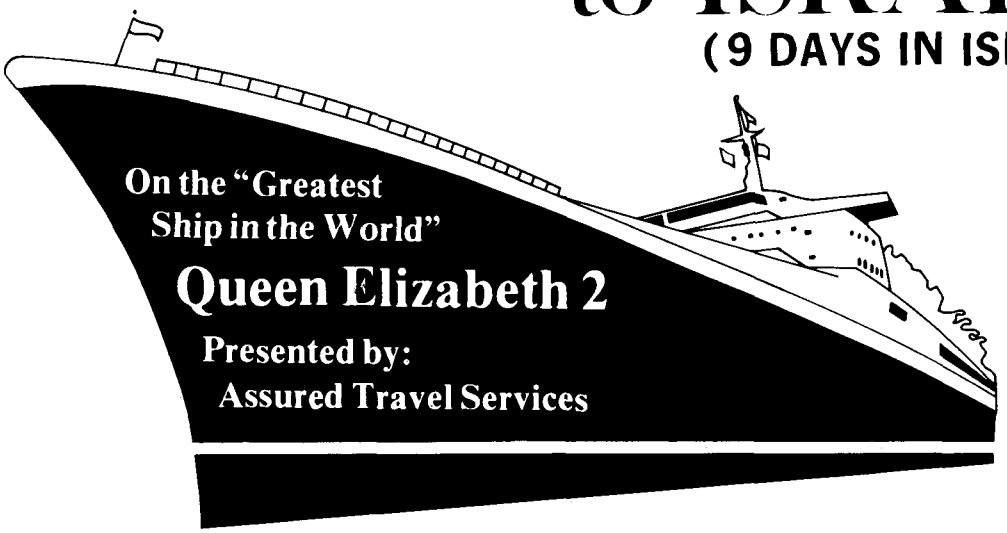

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ment of the "slippery slope," according to which the legitimation of abortion would set off just such a downward moral momentum as was implicit in the distinguished scientist's position. But that is not what I said to him. To him I replied that in my judgment anyone who sees no difference between a fetus and a newborn baby ought to be condemning abortion as murder and not applauding infanticide as enlightened. Certainly, I said, mongoloids are defective, but so are many other kinds of people. Some are blind, some are deaf, some are halt, some are lame, and some have missing limbs; some are given to madness and some are the prey of disease. If mongoloids can be put to death, why not these, and if these, why not anyone who fails of absolute perfection? Not overly bothered by any of this, he shrugged—and went on to tell me about a colleague of his, a molecular biologist of the greatest renown, who believes that no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment; if it fails these tests, it forfeits the right to live.

THAT the ethos out of which ideas like these emerge has infected the population-control movement is clear from Mr. McCracken's description of the writings of Martha K. Willing, who speaks of diabetics and dwarfs in exactly the spirit of that ethos. It is this which leads me to suspect that we may be dealing here not merely with an effort to control the size of the population but with an effort to control its character; not merely with an effort to control the quality of life but with an effort to control the quality of the human "stock" itself.

The last time such an effort was made, of course, was by the Nazis, and so horrible were the consequences that many people assumed it would never be tried again. Evidently, however, it has taken only twenty-five years for the eugenic dream to return—and now that it is back, it is back in force, purged of its crackpot racism, bolstered by an infinitely greater store of knowledge than was ever available to the Nazi scientists in those primitive days before the discovery of DNA and RNA and the "cracking" of the genetic code, and armed in the righteousness of a promise to eliminate all hereditary disorders and to save the world at last from human imperfection itself.

If this is truly what we are faced with in the ideology of population control, we all have reason to tremble. "Use every man after his desert," said Hamlet, "and who should 'scape whipping?" *A fortiori*, then: Let only the perfect live, and who should 'scape killing? Who, that is, but the framers of the definition of what "perfection" means? And even they in the end would devour themselves, so full of murderous hatred is the fantasy of human perfection for the reality of human life and for the imperfections to which the flesh must always be heir no matter what the geneticists or anyone else may ever contrive to do. ■

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Judith M. Hughes

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The Pottinger Papers*

HEW, Affirmative Action & the Universities

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am aware that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's enforcement of federal equal-employment-opportunity requirements on university campuses has significant implications for the higher-education community, but I don't believe Paul Seabury's article, "HEW & the Universities" [February], aids a helpful dialogue on the issues.

In upholding the concept of affirmative action in hiring, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals said:

> In direct procurement the Federal Government has a vital interest in assuring that the largest possible pool of qualified manpower be available for the accomplishment of its projects.

That, simply put, is the philosophy guiding the enforcement of Executive Order 11246, which requires nondiscriminatory employment practices by government contractors. Universities are special places of scholarship and teaching, yes; they are also federal contractors and they are employers of people. They incur the obligations of other contractors and other employers.

Mr. Seabury's implication that higher-education communities are exempt from bias does not accord with our findings. And, as another court said in regard to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, "Congress did not intend to freeze an entire generation of Negro employees into discriminatory patterns that existed before the Act."

Mr. Seabury dwells almost exclusively on the Executive Order's requirement regarding the hiring and recruiting of minorities and women. In fact, the requirement involves much more than "a body count." Much of the Executive Order, its regulation, and our compliance energies are devoted to the training and promotion of minorities and women, removing current job barriers, adjusting current policies that have the effect of excluding minorities and women from equal opportunity. Affirmative-action programs include efforts to notify women and minority applicants of openings, to provide career counseling, to review possibly discriminatory clauses in work agreements, to encourage child-care, housing, and transportation programs that will improve employment opportunities, to include women and minorities on personnel staff-and-search committees. Does Mr. Seabury view these ingredients of affirmative-action programs as "pernicious"?

It is true, as Mr. Seabury points out, that university campuses have disproportionately small shares of certain political persuasions and any number of other categories. But, more to the point, federal nondiscriminatory requirements are intended to protect those who are the victims of something *over which they have no control*—their race or their sex or their national origin. That form of discrimination is the most invidious, and that is where we should aim our efforts, not at fanciful extensions of a wholly legitimate government policy.

Mr. Seabury writes, "Compliance with demands from the federal government would compel a stark remodeling of [universities'] criteria of recruitment, their ethos of professionalism, and their standards of excellence." Suffice it to say that HEW's enforcement of the Executive Order will undoubtedly produce a change in the traditional ways that universities recruit and hire. To the extent that this means an end to discrimination, I for one hope that this will be the case.

Elliot L. Richardson
Secretary
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

My colleagues at the Office for Civil Rights are anxious to set the record straight with regard to Paul Seabury's article on our work. It is bad enough that they are battered from all sides for their efforts to enforce the law, but to have a major article compound and create inaccuracies about the work they are doing is even worse.

The affirmative-action requirements regarding minority and female employment among federal contractors do not stem from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as Mr. Seabury says. The history of Executive Orders affecting employers with federal contracts goes back to the early 1940's. For thirty years, Presidents have exercised the powers of their office to state terms for the letting of federal contracts—terms which address discrimination in contractor-employment practices. Nondiscrimination has long been a matter of contractual obligation.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies to employers generally; its requirements are not based on a contractual relationship with the federal government. Mr. Seabury should know that Title VII, in Section 702, excludes from its protection employees of educational institutions engaged in educational activities.†

Mr. Seabury notwithstanding, Title VII, Judge Smith, and Congressional chivalry in 1964 are unrelated to the government's contract-compliance program.

Mr. Seabury's protestations about federal requirements affecting universities with contracts are a little late in coming. Federal contracts have included intricate procedural and auditing requirements for years; is the nondiscriminatory requirement now being enforced especially distasteful?

Mr. Seabury implies that universities are threatened, harassed, and indeed deprived of valuable contracts by arbitrary bureaucrats.

* J. Stanley Pottinger is director of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office for Civil Rights which is responsible for the affirmative-action programs criticized in Paul Seabury's article, "HEW & the Universities" [February], and discussed in the correspondence in this section.—Ed.

† See the footnote on page 27.—Ed.

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In fact, we are required by Executive Order 11246 almost endlessly to exhaust channels for voluntary compliance. In the case of Columbia University, eighteen months of negotiations had passed before this office notified the university that, finally, Columbia was no longer eligible for new contract awards until it showed evidence that it could comply with Executive Order 11246. New contract awards were simply suspended, they were not taken away irrevocably from Columbia. Three months later, after the university *still* did not present evidence of compliance, the office—as it is obligated to do—notified Columbia that the university was entitled to a formal hearing on the issue of whether all contractual aid should be terminated. The process is a long, deliberate one, with ample opportunity for a contractor to present good-faith evidence of compliance, or to argue his case, prior to the point of being damaged. Our office has said all along that we have not reached the point of accusing Columbia of employment bias. How could we if Columbia has not yet developed the basic information required of employers with federal contracts?

Mr. Seabury portrays the university community as the epitome of democracy, where achievement is all that really matters. We have heard the same said of other institutions in our national life—including professional athletics. To a great degree this is true, but can Mr. Seabury argue that blacks and Spanish-surnamed Americans and women have not been excluded historically from this democratization? Moreover, in the postwar years, at least nine states (including New York) felt compelled to pass "Fair Education Practices Acts" to open up the ranks of the academic world to minorities. Would such legislation have been necessary if higher education were historically free of bias? Yet Mr. Seabury argues, "by the 1950's, the great American universities attained an authentic cosmopolitanism of scholarship."

Mr. Seabury accuses us of picking on the most prestigious institutions. In fact, that is where the most publicity is generated by our visits and where complaining groups and individuals have been most active.

The courts have moved far beyond Mr. Seabury's insistence that the Constitution is color-blind. How can anyone determine whether minorities are being segregated or excluded or discriminated against unless one knows the race of those participating in an activity? We all look forward to the day when race will indeed be an irrelevant factor in our activities, but in order to overcome the discrimination of the past, we have no alternative at this point in time but to use the race factor as a means of restoring equal opportunity. In upholding the Philadelphia Plan, the best-known application of the Executive Order under discussion, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals said:

> Clearly the Philadelphia Plan is color-conscious. Indeed the only meaning which can be attributed to the "affirmative-action" language which since March of 1961 has been included in successive Executive Orders is that government contractors must be color-conscious.

To imply that HEW compliance-officers are engaged in no more than a "body count" is contradicted by the quotation from the Department of Labor regulations used by Mr. Seabury himself. It is precisely because each contractor is obligated to develop a complete analysis of its deficiencies that our relationship with universities is so involved and lengthy. The affirmative-action commitment involves far more than goals for increasing the numbers of women and minorities in the employment rolls. Before entering upon the debate over goals and timetables, there are many constructive steps universities could take immediately to assure increased participation of women and minorities. Will Mr. Seabury join us in urging universities to take such steps?

My main hope is to set to rest any ideas that COMMENTARY readers may have that the affirmative-action requirement imposed on universities is something HEW bureaucrats devised, that HEW is the only federal agency insisting upon these requirements among its contractors, and that our activity in any way threatens the quality or integrity of institutions of higher education.

ROBERT E. SMITH
Assistant Director for
Public Affairs
Office for Civil Rights
Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In connection with Paul Seabury's article, I thought you should see the material below, which is unfortunately self-explanatory.

[Name Withheld]
New York City

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

January 20, 1972

Memorandum

To: Deans, Directors and Department Chairmen
SUBJECT: Academic Appointments and Affirmative-Action Program

Columbia University is firmly committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in its faculty-employment practices. In order to demonstrate that our practice and policies are in accord, it is necessary to request of you that certain additional information on faculty recruitment and appointments be recorded and preserved. This information will provide the statistical bases for our Affirmative-Action Program and for future reports that must be submitted to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The attached memorandum from the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost explains the procedures to be followed.

I assure you that nothing in the current Federal Law or in these new reporting procedures will diminish our long-standing tradition of appointing only persons of promise or distinction as scholars and teachers. The academic and personal qualifications of each individual to whom a Columbia appointment is offered must continue to be the only criteria for selection.

At the same time, it is my belief that academic excellence is not one-dimensional. An increased number of members of minority groups and women within the instructional ranks will add significantly to the strength and vitality of Columbia University.

[signed] WILLIAM J. MCGILL
President

Memorandum

January 20, 1972

To: Deans, Directors and Department Chairmen
SUBJECT: Revised appointment procedures

In order that Columbia may demonstrate to the Department of

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Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Health, Education, and Welfare that our recruiting and appointment procedures are nondiscriminatory, I am revising the procedures as follows:

Recruiting

1. Whenever a department or school has any teaching position to be filled, the appropriate hiring officer or search committee must make every effort to locate and consider women and members of minority groups who are qualified for the position. Consequently, any letters or other communications sent to other universities requesting candidates for positions at Columbia must make this point clear.

2. From this date on, each department and school must keep all academic job inquiries received, whether or not there are teaching positions to be filled in the department. It is strongly recommended that these inquiries be kept for 18 months so that they are available if investigators from HEW wish to consult them.

Appointments

1. Attached is a one-page form which must now be submitted along with the nomination form for every new instructional appointment (with the exception of the part-time graduate student ranks). This form requires the names of all candidates who were seriously considered (i.e., everyone who was interviewed or considered beyond the initial screening process) for the position to be filled.

2. For every tenure appointment, I am instructing each *ad hoc* committee to require (in addition to the usual material) specific written evidence that the search which produced the candidate also considered women and members of minority groups. I ask that, whenever possible, a letter of reference for each candidate be solicited from a scholar who is a woman or a member of a minority group.

I know that the keeping, preserving, and transmitting of this information will constitute an additional burden on the already strained administrative and clerical staffs. However, the information is essential not only to demonstrate our compliance with the law, but also to assess accurately our academic employment practices.

[signed] WM. THEODORE DEBARY
Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs
& Provost

CONFIDENTIAL
RECRUITING REPORT FOR

_____
POSITION, DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL

This report must be filed, along with the appropriate Nomination for Appointment form, for each new Office of Instruction (except for the part-time graduate student ranks of Preceptor, Teaching Assistant, Reader, and Departmental Research Assistant).

List below all candidates seriously considered (i.e., interviewed or considered beyond the initial screening) for the position to be filled. Include the nominee first.

NAME	SEX	ETHNIC GROUP*	VIETNAM VET	SOURCE OF REFERRAL	DISPOSITION
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

*Please use the following code:
A = Black
B = Oriental
D = Spanish Surname
E = Caucasian
F = Other

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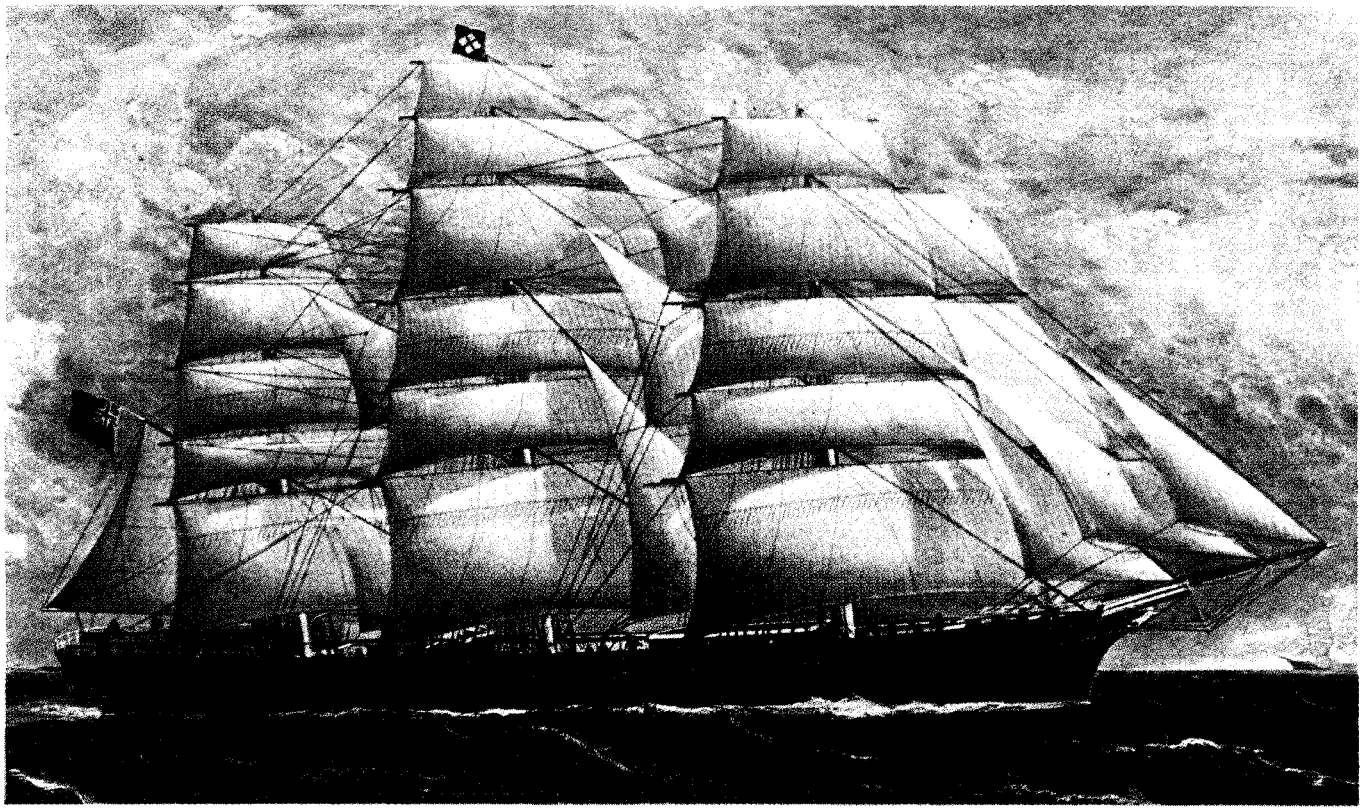

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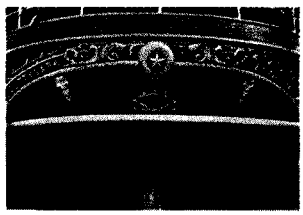

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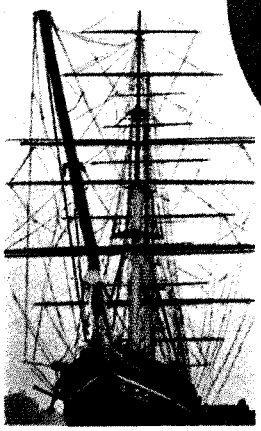

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To the Editor of Commentary:

A dangerous aspect of the issue spotlighted by Paul Seabury is the pervasive nature of this assault on laboriously achieved democratic rights. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is, after all, an agency of the federal government. It seems almost fatuous to note that even its most minute action must pass constitutional scrutiny. Any deviation becomes a precedent large enough to drive a bulldozer through all manner of long-established civil and academic defenses. In its pressuring of the colleges HEW not only seeks to force the establishment of illegal racial and sex quotas and preferential treatment but by so doing undermines even soundly-based efforts to provide equal-employment opportunity for women and minority-group members.

Sidney Hook in two recent articles in *Freedom At Issue* cites another startling incursion. At one Ivy League university, he reveals, representatives of the regional HEW demanded an explanation of why there were no women or minority students in the graduate department of religious studies. "They were told," said Dr. Hook, "that a reading knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was presupposed." According to the article, the representatives of HEW advised orally: "Then end those old-fashioned programs that require irrelevant languages and start programs on relevant things which minority-group students can study without learning languages." Can one imagine a more serious inroad into academic freedom and the integrity of individual scholarship than the federal government's probing into the curriculum which independent scholars will teach?

Even a professedly liberal and very influential communications specialist apparently fails to recognize in this an implicit danger. The executive producer of a major television network news program at NBC wrote me that questions such as these are "philosophical in nature" and therefore not of great moment. One wonders whether he would similarly regard and accept a demand by the FCC—under pain, say, of withdrawing WNBC's license—that it broadcast daily a specified percentage of pro-administration news on its network program.

Not too long ago, the most minute threat to one person's civil liberties or academic freedom was assumed to be a threat to everyone's. Today, it would appear, the "salami-ing" of civil rights is acceptable as long as the knife is affirmatively labeled—and doesn't cut close to home.

Leonard R. Sussman
Executive Director
Freedom House
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

As someone who has been deeply associated with the problems of sex discrimination in the academic world for some years (I spearheaded the national campaign of the Women's Equity Action League to get the Executive Order enforced with regard to sex discrimination in universities, worked for Representative Edith Green on the hearings, "Discrimination against Women," and was until recently the Deputy Director of the Women's Action Program of HEW), I was profoundly shocked at Paul Seabury's inaccurate article. . . . Let me detail some of his errors.

1) He talks of the Civil Rights Act which forbids discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, and sex. He neglects to mention that the Act *exempts* educational institutions.

2) He refers to the Executive Order as a step that implements the Civil Rights Act. This is not true. The Executive Order has a history going back to 1941, with subsequent Presidents strengthening and refining the concepts involved in requiring federal contractors to refrain from discrimination. . . .

3) He refers to the Carnegie Commission's report that federal *contract* funds to universities be increased; the Carnegie Commission made no such recommendation. They referred to *grants* which are directly aimed at helping institutions, and which have no restrictions in terms of sex discrimination or employment (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act does *not* cover sex). Contracts are services the government needs and pays for; the aim is *not to help the contractor but to obtain a service.* The Executive Order covers *all* contractors, and the government's right to determine what it shall re-

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quire of contractors in the way of nondiscrimination has been upheld in the courts. . . .

4) He exalts the academic community's "cosmopolitanism of scholarship" and the "democratization of the university" and describes the situation of women and minorities as mere statistical disparities. He does not mention the real discrimination against women in the academic community. Representative Edith Green's hearings documented a massive and vicious pattern of discrimination against women. He neglects to mention that more charges against universities have been filed by women than by all the other minorities put together. More than 360 institutions have been charged with a pattern of discrimination; not one of these charges has been refuted in any of the subsequent investigations by HEW.

5) He refers to preferential treatment in India, implying that similar preferential treatment is our government's aim. Nothing could be further from the truth and anyone who is familiar with the Executive Order, Revised Order No. 4, and the court cases upholding the government, knows that preferential treatment would be a *violation* of the Executive Order. There is no intent whatsoever to force employers to hire unqualified persons. What employers must do is make every effort to bring women and minorities into the recruiting network, to apply the same criteria for hiring, promotion, etc., to men and women, white and black alike.

6) He talks about "statistical disparities" by mentioning the few Republicans in his own department. . . . He neglects to mention, however, that his own department has come under considerable fire by women at the University of California as "one of the worst anti-female departments on the campus." According to figures released by a Berkeley Academic Senate Report in May 1970, the department of political science has last hired a woman in 1966. No women were hired before that since 1920. Although the top five political science departments in the nation awarded 12.1 per cent of their doctorates to women, the Berkeley department awarded only 8.3 per cent of its doctorates to women between 1964 and 1968. . . .

7) He states that HEW gives universities only 30 days to develop compliance information.

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Again Mr. Seabury reveals his ignorance of HEW procedures: universities are notified several weeks before an investigation begins; institutions having difficulty in developing the information are given repeated extensions, such as at Columbia; the institution agrees to give this date when it first signs the contracts, so that requests for it should hardly come as a surprise.

8) . . . Mr. Seabury continually quotes university directives that *misinterpret* the government's policies, and then *holds these quotations as examples of the government's policies.* This is indeed another example of sloppy research on his part.

9) Mr. Seabury's knowledge of the government's requirement of statistical target goals is equally lacking. These goals are not quotas. Quotas are fixed, numerical limits with the discriminatory intent of restricting a specified group from a particular activity. Goals, on the other hand, are numerical target aims which a contractor tries to achieve. The aim is not discriminatory but affirmative in intent: to help increase the number of qualified minority people in the organization. . . .

Failure to meet a goal does not automatically indicate noncompliance provided that good-faith efforts have been made to meet the goals. There is no intent to force the employer to hire unqualified persons (that would clearly be illegal: see *Hughes* v. *Superior Court,* 32 Cal., 2d 850, 198 p2d, 885, 1948).

Goals are set in line with the various aspects of the minority and female work force (number of minority population, size of available minority and female work force with requisite skills, etc.). A good-faith effort must be made to reach the minority and female target goals. The contractor may not, in so doing, discriminate against any qualified applicant or employee on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. . . .

10) Mr. Seabury talks about HEW's access to personnel files, speaking of the "sacrosanct documents of academia," and the need for confidentiality. He does not mention that HEW employees cannot reveal these documents to anyone without losing their jobs. The information is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act and is protected from disclosure by 5 U.S.C. 552 (b) (7) U.S. Code.

As I mentioned earlier, the institution, of course, has agreed to show these documents when it signed the contracts in the first place. If Mr. Seabury knows how to tell if discrimination against women and minorities has occurred without allowing examination of personnel files, I wish he would let the rest of us know how to do this.

11) Mr. Seabury worries about the impact of such affirmative action on white males. Of course, it will be harder for some of them to get jobs. For years white males have used their sex and color as a way of keeping the competition (non-white, non-males) from competing with them in the first place. Well-qualified males will now have to compete with well-qualified women and minorities. Hiring that is in line with the government's policy is on the basis of ability; the best-qualified person is hired regardless of sex or color or national origin, even if that person turns out to be white and male. The intent is not to give preference to any group, but to see that all groups are considered equally. In a recent consent decree in the Libby Owens Ford case, the judge stated that when discrimination ends, some people may indeed lose something, but what they lose is what they were not entitled to in the first place.

Discrimination against women is the last socially acceptable prejudice. It has gone unchallenged and unchecked, particularly in the academic world, for too many years. I assume that Mr. Seabury likewise condemns such discrimination. What he would suggest doing about it remains to be seen.

BERNICE SANDLER
Executive Associate and Director
Project on the Status and
Education of Women
Association of American Colleges
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Seabury's article . . . is filled with fine examples of the emotive use of language: women who attempt to utilize the Civil Rights Act are "horning in"; the inclusion of women in the Act is termed "a fit of inspired raillery," "a perverse stratagem," "a fall-back strategy"; HEW investigators are "Nixon's men ransacking the inner temple"; statistics demonstrating compliance with the law are "body counts." The article offers as evidence quotations from vague, unverifiable sources: "a white third-year law student," "an enthusiastic affirmative-action administrator," "a Women's Commission lady" at Michigan. . . . Finally, and most important, it . . . omits any relevant evidence. First of all, Mr. Seabury never mentions the fact that the goal is representation of minorities on faculties in proportion to their number in a *relevant* community. For a university teaching position, a relevant community would not be the local community in which the university is situated (although this might be the relevant community for non-teaching positions) or the total population of the United States, but might be the total pool of Ph.D.'s produced in the field in a given period, or the number of graduate students in that particular university at a given time. Universities are asked to supply their *own* affirmative-action plan, subject to HEW approval. An example of a possible plan is set forth in the recommendations of the *Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences* (Harvard University, April, 1971):

> The Harvard Faculty should strive to achieve a percentage of women in its tenured ranks equal to the percentage of women receiving Ph.D.'s from Harvard ten years ago (9.6 per cent in 1959-60) and a percentage of women in the non-tenured ranks equal to the percentage of women receiving Ph.D.'s from Harvard today (19 per cent in 1968-69).

By blurring over the notion of relevant community, Mr. Seabury is able to raise an unnecessary specter of Jewish suffering: the fact that Jews make up about 3 per cent of the population but a much higher percentage of certain professions does not mean that Jews are therefore necessarily "overrepresented" in these professions (as Norman Podhoretz seems to feel in "Is It Good for the Jews?" [February]). In terms of relevant communities, they may be fairly represented, or even underrepresented.

Secondly, by omitting facts about the available pool of qualified female Ph.D.'s, and by omitting data about the relative achievements of men and women in graduate schools and their later relative achievements in teaching and publishing, Mr. Seabury masks the absurdity of his basic unexamined assumption: that the hiring of women is equivalent to the hiring

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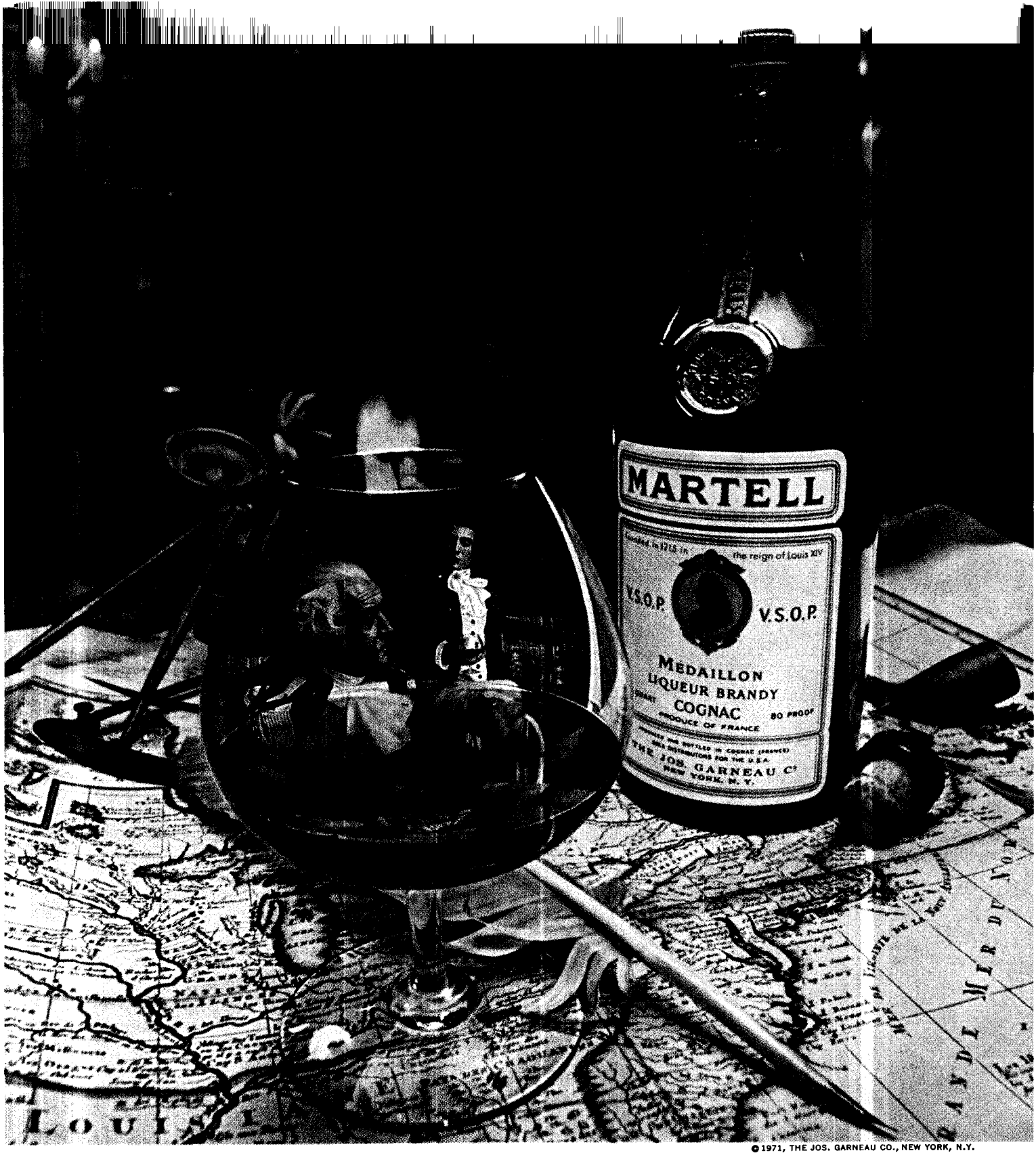

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of unqualified or poorly-qualified applicants, and that increasing numbers of women on faculties will decrease quality. . . .

Paul Seabury teaches at a top university. According to his own statement, it is therefore reasonable to infer that he was one of the top 5 per cent of the graduates of one of the top ten universities. I assume that he is white, from the concern he shows for white males. Therefore, he represents the uppermost elite, the select group of "best-qualified" white males. If this is the best that the system can do, we should be thankful indeed that we have HEW to provide us with an instrument of change.

NANCY DEMAND
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For some time now I have been actively pressing the Nixon administration to prevent new forms of discrimination in the name of affirmative action to end other discrimination. This battle has until recently been given little public exposure. I was, therefore, glad to see Paul Seabury's article. I would add two items to Mr. Seabury's analysis: 1) In response to my requests, guidelines on affirmative action to end religious discrimination have finally been issued by the administration (*Federal Register*, December 29, 1971), and 2) J. Stanley Pottinger, director of HEW's Office for Civil Rights, has finally admitted in writing to me that he is not so much concerned with discrimination in university employment as he is concerned with "overcoming underrepresentation" (i.e., establishing quota systems). . . . Let me quote here from the letter I sent to Mr. Pottinger and to John J. Wilks, director of the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance:

> It has come to my attention that several branches of the City University of New York may be violating or intend to violate Executive Order 11246 (affirmative action) by establishing ethnic quotas and discriminating against some minorities (particularly Jews and Italo-Americans) and also women in the process of taking affirmative action to end discrimination against other minorities. . . .
>
> I believe that you can prevent the creation of new discrimination and new rifts in our society by taking the following actions:
>
> 1) Reinterpret the implicit definition of discriminated minorities used in enforcement of the affirmative-action program so as to include Jews and Italo-Americans. . . .
>
> 2) Postpone your consideration and approval of the affirmative-action program that the City University is sending to you, so that I, perhaps with other Representatives from New York City, can conduct hearings into the potential effects of that program and the cases of discrimination at CUNY which may have resulted from that program. . . .
>
> 3) Develop and promulgate a more sophisticated measure of discrimination than is currently used so that federal contractors like the City University do not feel it necessary to adopt quota systems. Just because the proportion of minority employees of a federal contractor is not similar to the proportion of such minorities in the general population is not proof of discrimination. . . .

BERTRAM L. PODELL
Member of Congress
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

COMMENTARY is to be congratulated on the publication of Paul Seabury's "HEW & the Universities." Discriminatory hiring and promotion practices exist in higher education and some of us have fought these effectively with appropriate professional procedures. Now HEW is engaged in a national campaign fiscally bulldozing the country's colleges and universities into the establishment of new forms of sex and racial discrimination, all in the name of "equal opportunity." George Orwell merely imagined things; this is the story of our own government—Republicans as well as Democrats—openly engaged in the use of fiscal and bureaucratic pressure to compel the majority to comply with clearly illegal quota schemes which are verbally camouflaged as "affirmative action." If this campaign is allowed to stand unchallenged, what shall we be able to do or say when an articulate and determined majority decides to avail itself of the precedents established by "liberal" administrators?

HARRY D. GIDEONSE
Chancellor
New School for Social Research
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Seabury's article refers to a Letter to the Editor, written by four Cornell professors and appearing in the New York *Times* on January 6. The reference is unfortunate because the letter was based on a misunderstanding.

Over a year ago, on January 12, 1971, I wrote to the Deans, Directors, and Department Chairmen at Cornell to set forth what we believed to be a realistic and energetic program to achieve affirmative-action goals shared by Cornell University and the administration in Washington. There is a reference on page 2 of that memorandum to the possibility of hiring "underqualified or marginally qualified people," but I believe it is clear in the context that this refers exclusively to *non-academic personnel capable of being trained to meet requirements.* This point was emphasized in a memorandum of January 13, 1972, written by Cornell Provost Robert A. Plane to clarify any misunderstanding which may have arisen within the university community as a result of the letter to the New York *Times.* As Provost Plane pointed out, "Any Cornell faculty member should be, from the time of his appointment to the faculty, fully qualified for the position held."

May I note in passing that Mr. Seabury has omitted a crucial phrase, relating to applicants for employment, from his quotation from President Johnson's Executive Order No. 11375 of 1967. The second sentence in the quote should read as follows (the omitted phrase is here underlined): 'The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure *that applicants are employed,* and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

DALE R. CORSON
President
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Seabury, evidently alarmed that HEW and affirmative-action schemes will eventually push the academy off the federal gravy train, . . . has provided COMMENTARY's readers with a distorted image of the university world and no suggestion whatsoever of what underlies current academic discontent. But in so doing he has revealed the academy's continuing concern to feed at the public trough while remaining aloof from the real world. His only substantive response to the problems raised by the structural dynamics

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of American society is that the academy is (somehow) exempt from them and should remain so.

Within the space of one page, and without any sense of disjuncture, Mr. Seabury enlarges first upon the "democratic . . . tone" of the American academy, finding within it "the relative decline of ethnic and social-class snobberies," and then presents a catalogue of the precluded and excluded. But even here it is presumably their own fault and not that of the academy. Thus Mr. Seabury argues, with more conviction than logic, that "few Catholics are to be found in the roster of distinguished faculties" because Catholic universities "have stood aside from the mainstream of secular higher education." Never mind the problem of how Mr. Seabury's academy "attained an authentic cosmopolitanism of scholarship" though systematically precluding serious representatives of one of Western civilization's important intellectual and cultural traditions. . . . Now, not just Catholics, but women, blacks, Chicanos, and the rest of the hoi polloi would like to know why the academy has been so myopic and has failed to seek them out as well. And, if so myopic, what of its claims to scholarship and excellence?

Perhaps the answer lies more in ideology than myopia. During the 50's, when Mr. Seabury's "lost legion of liberals" was experiencing its democratization to such an extent that it abandoned formal quota systems for Jews, it was equally busy slamming shut the gates of the academy to representatives of other intellectual and cultural traditions in defense of "scholarship." It was not possible to be a Communist and a scholar, the legionnaires argued through their American Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Association of American Universities. . . . However, if scholarship could not be reconciled to a scholarly radicalism, it could develop a politics compatible to its needs. But this politics has made the academy parochial; as a result, Seabury's "non-territorial nationalism" is mere cultural chauvinism and his argument but an assertion of male proprietary instinct.

Now, women, blacks, and all the rest dismissed by Mr. Seabury as mere "sociological categories . . . [representing] statistical disparities" are claiming entrance to the academy not on a basis of preference, but on the basis of a need that carries with it a right. The problem of preference is inherent in the way the liberal academy goes about supplying commodities for its marketplace in an economy of scarcity. But the need for entrance to the academy derives from the fact that non-liberal perceptions of human reality exist, and require competent, concerned scholarly investigation by those who possess them and, hence, take them seriously, and who cannot and should not therefore be compelled to submit to *a priori* commitment to the academy's current definition of self-interest. In this context, it is indeed ironic to note the liberal opposition to quotas, for so long as American capitalism maintains its economic and cultural hegemony, this solution may be the only way for Mr. Seabury's "lost legion of liberals," *viz.* white male chauvinists, to remain within academe's grove.

JOHN J. RUMBARGER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thought you might be interested in my correspondence with the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey. As supervisor in charge of administering ETS examinations at Smith College, I received a form letter requesting a "careful review [of] test-administration practices to make certain that they consistently result in fair and equal treatment of all candidates, particularly minority and sending-school candidates." The letter continued: "In this connection, if assistants are needed for your center, we urge that you make every effort to enlist them in approximately the same ethnic and sex ratios as will be represented among the candidates. . . ."

My response read in part as follows: "In reference to the selection of assistants, I fail to see how I can comply with your urging. . . . As you know, prior to the administration of the exam, I receive a list of the names of students registered for the exam (s). My competence to judge ethnicity from names is very limited. Consequently, I have no accurate means of ascertaining that the assistants will in fact reflect the same ethnic ratio represented among the candidates.

"The one 'fact' I am aware of in relation to your suggestions is that each time I have administered

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the exams at Smith, 90 per cent or more of the candidates have been women. . . .

"More than likely in the future, women will continue to make up 90 per cent or more of those taking the exams here at Smith. I am confident that we shall never have a sufficient number of candidates who are Caucasian, Catholic, male, French Canadian (*my* race, religion, sex, and ethnic background) to allow my presence as a supervisor. The *possibility* of one or two of the candidates present having the same characteristics means that my presence with two or three assistants results in a gigantic overrepresentation; and, furthermore, makes it impossible to have the other two or three people be representative on a sufficiently broad basis. Really, based on previous groups of candidates, only women should serve as supervisors or assistants in the administration of exams at Smith College. I am not able to specify what ethnic background these women should have.

"Consequently, I am faced with several choices of action. I am willing to choose this one: I will no longer serve in any way in the administration of exams for the Educational Testing Service here at Smith College. If I should find myself at a Canadian college or university with a sufficient number of Caucasian, Catholic, male, French Canadian candidates, I feel I would meet your criteria, and I would be willing to reconsider."

RAYMOND A. DUCHARME
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The universities, supposedly enlightened oases of excellence, have their hidden pools of privilege and power. It's time that these all-male sanctuaries were stormed. Paul Seabury says: "Men will be less able to know, much less to sustain, the professional standards by which they and others judge and are judged." To this I say, hallelujah! Let the fresh breezes enter.

HARRIET ALPERN
Metropolitan Detroit Chapter
National Organization of Women
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Scent out sexism indeed! Open your eyes, Mr. Seabury. . . . How can you explain conditions at in-

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stitutions like the University of California at Berkeley where 42 per cent of the undergraduates and 26 per cent of the graduate students are women, but where women hold only 2 per cent of the tenured faculty positions. The percentage of women on the Berkeley faculty has actually declined 50 per cent in the past twenty years, a period of government largess, university expansion, and grant-swinging, when our most prestigious institutions opened their doors to public-school graduates and dropped Jewish quotas. . . .

MARTHA MAXWELL
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The arguments advanced by Paul Seabury opposing the application of affirmative-action criteria to the universities are distressingly similar to those made by businessmen resisting governmental efforts to provide equal-employment opportunity in practice rather than in theory.

Mr. Seabury complains that compliance with federal demands to produce functional affirmative-action programs would require changes in recruitment policies and professional standards. How often have civil-rights compliance officers heard corporation personnel managers complain that hiring minorities means lowering standards! Let the universities learn from the experience of business that long-standing "objective" criteria (e.g., scoring at a given level on a test) may be irrelevant to ability to perform. Let them know that the Supreme Court has stated that pre-employment qualifications that cannot be demonstrably related to the ability to perform on the job may not be used to exclude minority-group applicants. I also urge Mr. Seabury to list the characteristics of the "qualified" faculty member. Do the professor's post-graduate degrees and publications mean that the students are necessarily getting a good teacher? . . .

Mr. Seabury is, of course, correct that, in the absence of an unlimited number of job openings, affirmative action for one group results in discrimination against another. As a white male working in the field of intergroup relations, I know that my own opportunities in this profession are somewhat restricted. I also know that because of the institutional racism and sexism that still persist, I probably have more choice of occupation than blacks (and women) with comparable education, and I will probably make more money.

I suppose that nondiscrimination in itself is a fine idea. The problem is that without affirmative action to change the old ways and pull down the old barriers, little but broken promises will result.

NORMAN SIDER
Executive Director
Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council
Indianapolis, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Two comments on "HEW & the Universities." The point that affirmative action for women is in competition with affirmative action for minorities is obviously true—good, bad, just, whatever, but true; —and, second, the cost of monitoring affirmative-action efforts is frightening to contemplate. But possibly more significant for higher education (and Mr. Seabury alludes to this) are the gains and/or losses which will result from the more structured, ordered, and rigid institutions we will have as a consequence of actions such as HEW's and of unionization. I'm not prepared to make up a balance sheet, but I will say that there are entries in both the debit and credit columns.

JACK H. HAMILTON
Director, University Relations
University of Michigan
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "HEW & the Universities" Paul Seabury seriously questions the wisdom of the present affirmative-action programs, especially in the dictatorial manner with which HEW pursues racial and ethnic representation in the universities. . . . There can be no doubt that the quota system as pursued by HEW and also as described by Earl Raab in "Quotas by Any Other Name" [January] denies the basic principle that in America an individual's advancement depends on his own qualifications and not on his group identity. It is interesting to note how ready we are to violate the concept and the practice of individual liberty.

Another phenomenon disturbs me (and for such concerns I may be called ethnocentric). Why do some universities try to limit Jewish enrollment? Or, more specifically, why do some administrators focus on the number of Jewish radicals rather than on the number of Jewish Nobel Prize winners? . . . In the final analysis, should not a university be more interested in the academic potential of Jews than a supposed political radicalism? . . .

These questions clearly transcend the concern of the American-Jewish community. Overall, there appears to be a disregard for quality in favor of equality. . . . Equality can be legislated; equality can be judged by numbers—by percentage of enrollment. But no amount of legislation or mathematical juggling can make the attainment of quality a fact *now*. University enrollment can be made to reflect the minority community by fiat, but the quality of the students' work cannot be so guaranteed. (I fear, nevertheless, that I shall some morning read in the newspaper of demands that 20 per cent of the Dean's List must be made up of minority-group members regardless of their Grade Point Average.) . . .

When the Coleman Report was published, people were concerned about equal opportunity: the right of the individual to advance without hindrance due to his race or ethnic group. It was pointed out that black children lacked equal opportunity. From this realization came the belief that government had to institute affirmative action to assure equal opportunity. Affirmative action was phrased in terms of righting wrongs. . . . But . . . the affirmative-action program was not sensitive to the loftiest ideals in the American tradition ("life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"), nor was it really a response to a desire for equal opportunity; rather it was a response to power politics. . . . The system itself was not changed, and now new groups who feel the pinch of discrimination are beginning to complain. If discrimination against blacks and Spanish-speaking groups is wrong, isn't discrimination against poor whites, Jews, Armenians, and white ethnics equally undesirable? . . .

RICHARD RUBIN
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was at the University of Michigan when HEW first raised the specter which Paul Seabury discusses so well and which plagues all of us who are in the position of having to recruit faculty for our respective institutions. The imposition of subtle, but nonetheless real,

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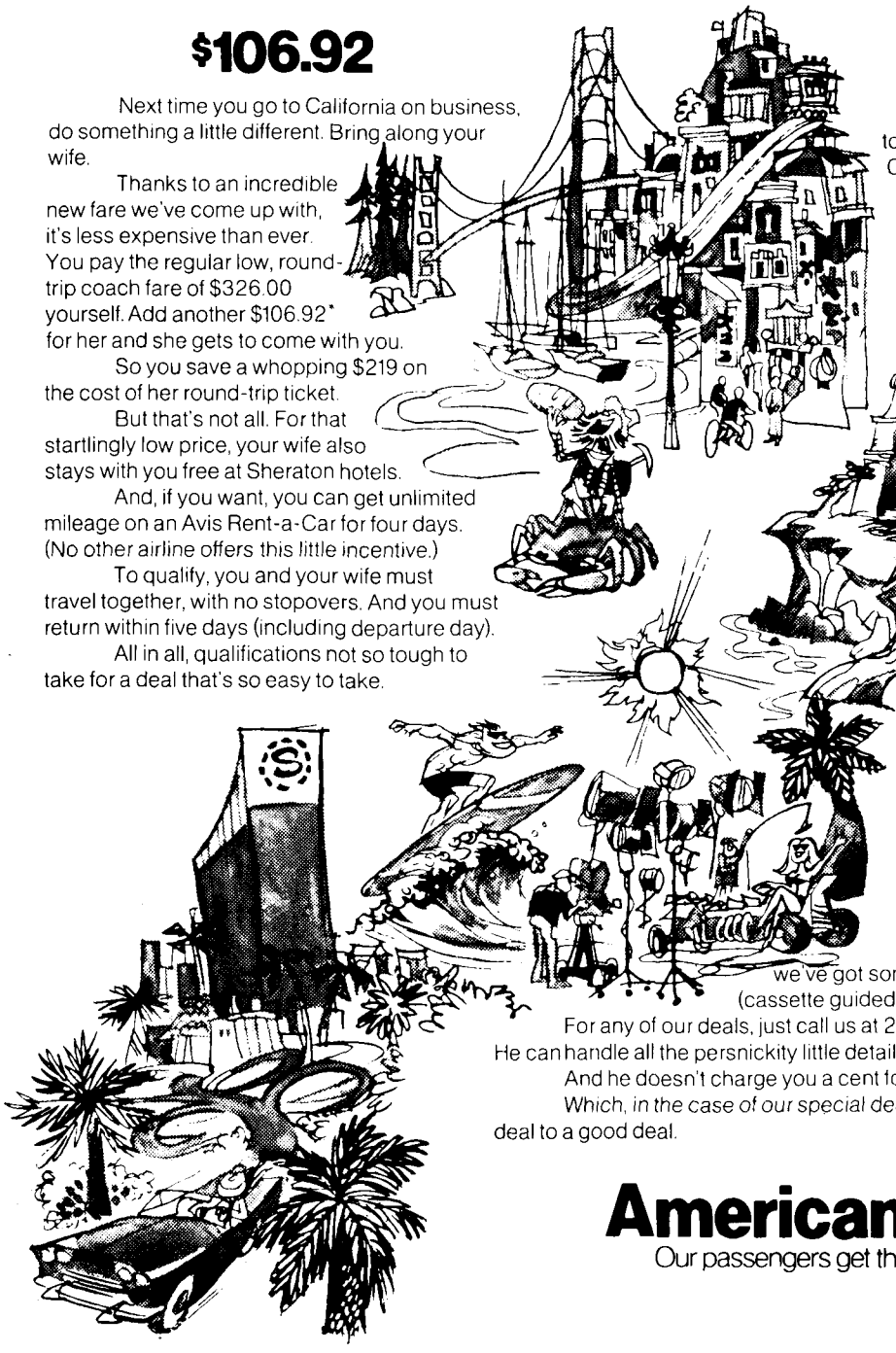

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quotas, . . . will ultimately do a disservice to those who have in the past been discriminated against. Given the limited number of members from minority groups, including women, available for academic positions, we find ourselves engaged in a mad rat-race of recruitment. Clearly, there are not now sufficient numbers to meet the quotas that have been established. Thus, to satisfy the rather futile criteria established by HEW, the concept of quality must go by the board. . . .

The time has come, as Mr. Seabury has indicated, for those of us on faculties . . . to rise up and express concern for the future of our universities. . . .

RONALD S. TIKOFSKY
Director, Division of Social Sciences
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Seabury's article was an excellent pragmatic discussion of the absurdity of quota-hiring in the academic world, but he did not allude to the general logical flaw in all quota proposals: the elemental injustice of an act of discrimination lies specifically in the fact that an individual is not treated according to his personal merit. Hence, it is not one's right "as a woman" or "as a black" which may be violated, but rather one's basic right as a person to be treated by the same standard of value as anyone else. . . .

WILLIAM HAVENDER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am surprised that Paul Seabury shows indignation and outrage over the actions of HEW, an arm of the federal government. Of all the different forces shaping public policy in the United States, the federal government is the one we should least expect to support the merit system. We elect as President and Vice President men nominated by their party not because they are the best-qualified for that high office, but because they are (or seem to be) the best-qualified to win an election. The merit system has never operated in the federal structure except on inconsequential non-policy-making levels. . . .

A. JOSEPH BERLAU
Hartsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a transplanted Yankee, working for seventeen years in a state which is operating its educational systems under a fair share of court orders, I can't help but be sadly amused at Paul Seabury's panicky response to HEW's affirmative-action policy. . . . Why should the faculty club be a sacred preserve around which the many revolutions we are currently caught up in make a polite detour? . . .

EDWARD WEGENER
Auburn, Alabama

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . For years our merit system has not operated to the best interests of either liberty or equality because an individual needed a certain ascriptive status to participate. Clearly this was an intolerable situation, for what good is a merit system which fails to reward individual merit? Yet the abandonment of the merit system hardly seems a logical remedy . . . for people concerned with individual liberty. . . .

In *Democracy in America* de Tocqueville . . . explains why we so readily compromise individual freedom in the name of equality.

> That political freedom in its excesses may compromise the tranquility, the property, the lives of individuals is obvious even to narrow and unthinking minds. [But] none but attentive and clear-sighted men perceive the perils with which equality threatens us.

Let us hope, then, that clear-sighted men like Paul Seabury, Milton Himmelfarb, and Earl Raab will continue to help us comprehend the principle of self-interest rightly understood.

RICHARD ABRAMS
Los Angeles, California

PAUL SEABURY writes:

A friend of mine, wise to the ways of opinion journals, once convinced me not to write a letter jibing at something an author had written. Just remember, he said, that whatever you write the author has the last word. My situation is now reversed.

Several common themes crop up among the letters critical of my article; for reasons of economy permit me to lump several of these together for response.

One pertains to the authority under which HEW's attacks on universities are undertaken. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 *and* subsequently-issued Executive Orders (e.g., Executive Order 11246 and

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Labor Department Order No. 4) declare affirmative action to be an obligation of federal contractors. For some obscure reason, the Civil Rights Act at the last moment was amended to render it inapplicable to university faculty hiring.* I regret that I did not make this clear in my article; in fact, it is regrettable that this amendment actually passed and was incorporated in the final Act. For had it not passed, the hypocrisy of HEW's activities would be all the more clear. In my article I sought to demonstrate that these Executive Orders in the name of affirmative action clearly contradict the letter and the spirit of the Act as well as the intentions of its sponsors. Universities are being compelled to do what the Act forbids employers to do. The federal government concurrently requires universities to discriminate and not to discriminate. But I would assume that the original statutory meaning of affirmative action should inhibit the executive branch from issuing orders clearly contradictory to it.

It also is argued that university hiring quotas are lawful, since a circuit-court decision in Philadelphia sustained the lawfulness of the so-called Philadelphia Plan. That ruling, not reviewed by the Supreme Court, pertained to quotas in industrial hiring of low-skill job apprentices. One raven does not make a winter; one lower-court ruling in an industrial case certainly cannot be regarded as a definitive ruling on university hiring practices.

In mentioning the circuit-court ruling, however, Secretary Richardson perhaps inadvertently exposes a feature of discriminatory hiring requirements which previously escaped my attention. The court, he notes, spoke of the government's "vital interest" in "assuring the largest possible pool of qualified manpower for its projects." Now, federal-contract projects in universities, valuable as these may be, usually exist on the periphery of the educational core. Important though their intrinsic merit may be, they are marginal to the central functions of higher education. It is one thing for the federal government to demand job discrimination in its own projects; it is something else again to demand job discrimination in the *whole sponsoring institution*. Query: Does HEW now regard universities as "federal projects"? If so, how far down the road of government control have we come?

Bernice Sandler's letter, like several others, is designed to convey the impression that preferential treatment on the basis of race and sex is not "our government's intention." Then, if she is right, why is the government doing it? HEW *does* require universities to establish numerical preferential hiring goals based on race and sex criteria. Everybody knows that.

But it is the routine habit of HEW officials to be very displeased when their critics refer to hiring "goals" as "quotas." I suspect that this is because, in academic circles at least, the word "quota" has enjoyed a very bad reputation, and HEW knows this. My dictionary (Webster's *Seventh*) defines "quota" as "a proportional part or share." Now, HEW routinely requires universities to propose (for its approval or disapproval) a number or amount (of women and/or minorities) which would constitute a proportional share of anticipated job openings. That these quotas might not be met by employers (who then would have to prove acceptable reasons to HEW for not meeting them) is no different from the failure of France to meet its quota of the UN budget. Perhaps a remedial English seminar could be established in the Office for Civil Rights.

In all this verbal confusion, we ought not to forget one interesting fact: in the past, when universities did shamelessly manipulate quotas—as in the case of Jews, for instance—there was no government requirement that they do so. Now there is. Is that progress?

Exemplar that I may be of the white male trash whom Nancy Demand sees as cluttering up higher education, permit me to tug an imaginary forelock and respond to some of her comments.

My evidence, she writes, is based upon "vague, unverifiable sources." My sources, however, are specific and verifiable. I would be willing, though not glad, to supply her with the particulars of the three instances she cites. In each of them I did not want to cause public embarrassment to the individuals mentioned.

Her main point, however, is that

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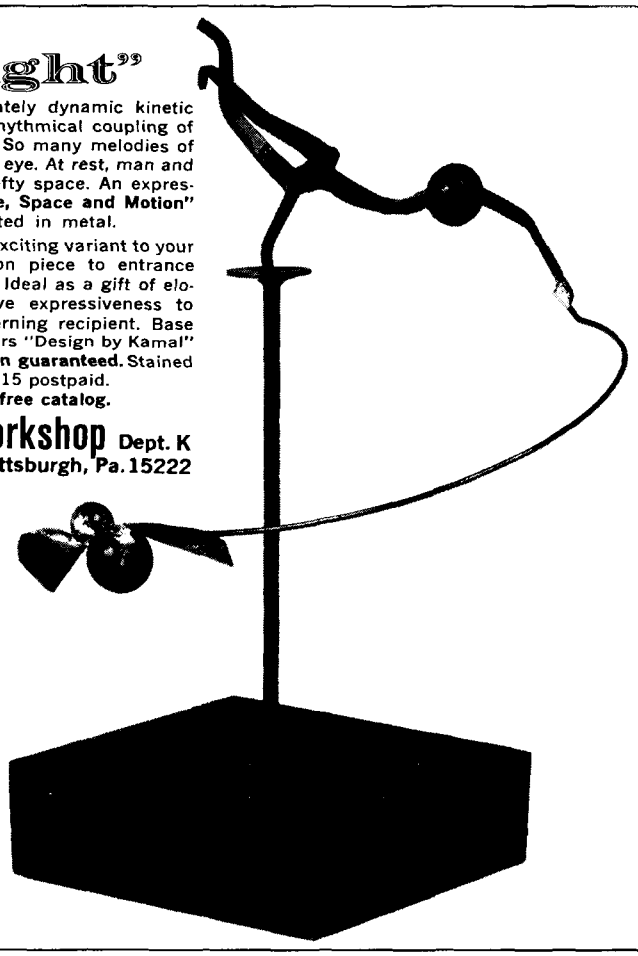

* Under the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, passed after this was written, educational institutions are no longer exempt from Title VII.—Ed.

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quotas should be devised for women and minorities in proportion to their number of a *relevant* community. Very good. Departments in truly cosmopolitan universities seek to recruit the best they can find from all over the world. (This, incidentally, distinguishes American universities from many European ones which are quite strict in discriminating against foreigners.) The relevant community of mathematicians, for example, knows no national boundaries. Where do we get race and sex data for this community? Can UNESCO supply it? Might we, when such data were stacked up in print-outs, possibly discover that HEW's criteria would require us to prefer Chinese, Russians, and Frenchmen? Perhaps, were Miss Demand in charge of supply, she might determine the relevant community in more parochial ways—as Harvard, being Harvard, apparently has. (Would Harvard's formlua, which she approvingly cites, appeal to her if Notre Dame also used it?) I suspect that each group claiming to speak for women or minorities really, if given the choice, would prefer a "relevant-community" formula most consistent with its perceived interests.

Finally, Miss Demand evidently knows more of my mind and its "unexamined assumptions" than I do. How could I assume that increasing the numbers of women on faculties will decrease (or, for that matter, increase) quality? The question of quality turns entirely on the competence of the individuals chosen, and not on irrelevant statistical criteria established by HEW and forbidden by the Civil Rights Act.

I appreciate Congressman Podell's concern about the visible damage to quality wrought by affirmative-action Executive Orders upon the New York City higher education system. Mr. Podell says that he has requested HEW to postpone further affirmative action in New York until he and other representatives from the city "can conduct hearings into the potential effects of that program." He also has asked for an enlarged federal definition of "discriminated minorities" to include Jews, Italo-Americans, and religious groups. I agree that the entire matter of quotas and discrimination needs Congressional investigation. But I doubt that adding more groups to the federal list, as he asks, can do more than dramatically establish the foolishness of HEW's quotas. To (mis)quote and update W.S. Gilbert, "when everybody's nobody, then no one is nobody!"

One trouble which I perhaps did not sufficiently stress in my article is that HEW's policies—in addition to the damage which they directly create—also inspire "do-it-yourself" affirmative-action programs which exceed in their boldness anything which HEW, in a crunch, might settle for in pursuit of its own purposes. If there are instances, and they are not known to me, where HEW has enjoined a university for too-blatant "benign quotas," it would be interesting to hear of them. We might then begin to see what standards of its own HEW is developing, to accord with the standards of the Civil Rights Act.

A limerick I have written sums up my view of this whole sorry matter:

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On Quotas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The thoughtful comments of Earl Raab in "Quotas by Any Other Name" [January] do much to clarify the proper manner in which the affirmative-action principle ought to be put into practice. . . . Certainly welcome is the meaningful distinction between achieved and ascribed status as well as the distinction between "historical" justice and "individual" justice. Mr. Raab, correctly I believe, argues that to achieve social justice to the detriment of individual justice is intrinsically unjust. . . .

Mr. Raab's remarks contribute greatly toward a much-needed clarification . . . and, moreover, one hopes they will be effective in countering those who would accept and even justify certain kinds of discrimination in the name of justice. . . .

JAMES A. GOLDMAN
Brooklyn, New York

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Earl Raab characterizes the opposition to school tracking as stemming from "frustrated reactions" and says that it is aimed at "wiping out" individual differences. . . .

Tracking is objectionable not because the tests on which group entrance are based happened to be "culturally biased" (there is little evidence to suggest that blacks perform well on so-called "culturally fair" tests), but rather because it quite neatly divides students along racial and social-class lines without pedagogical justification. The literally thousands of evaluations of tracking generally reach the same conclusion: such grouping benefits no one, including those in the most advanced group; it adversely affects both the academic potential and the psychological attitude of students assigned to the slowest ability groups. . . .

To be sure, no one is served by ignoring distinctions among students. Mechanically to offer a single program to all comers, whatever their educational needs or interests, is likely to benefit none. All of the currently faddish educational reform efforts—open classrooms . . . , team teaching and nongraded programs, educational vouchers—recognize that fact, and, indeed, they actually *increase* the differentiation among students. But these approaches differ from tracking schemes in one fundamental way: they do not assume that any single measure of differentiation (like aptitude tests) is capable of identifying and sorting out these differences, and thereby determining the child's entire educational experience for a year or more. . . .

DAVID L. KIRP
Graduate School of Public Policy
University of California
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I cannot agree with Earl Raab that a 5-per-cent preference given to Negroes would be acceptable and only a 75-per-cent preference would be discriminatory. . . . Mr. Raab refers to the disadvantages suffered by Negroes. It is instructive in this regard to see how restitution is handled by the present government of the German Federal Republic. A Jew who claims damages must prove that he personally was hurt by the Nazi laws (that he lost property, a paid position, etc.); Germany does not shower

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money on American-Jewish millionaires who never had anything to do with Germany simply because they happen to be Jewish. If a Negro can prove that a law promulgated by federal or state government unjustly caused damages to him personally, he should apply to the responsible agency for restitution; but affording privileges to the whole Negro race is racism. . . .

J. J. BIKERMAN

Cleveland, Ohio

EARL RAAB writes:

Well, let's not call it "tracking" or "ability grouping." Let's just say, with David Kirp, that "to offer a single program to all comers, whatever their educational needs or interests, is likely to benefit none." And a little field research reveals the pressures on the urban schools to pretend that such differentials in need and interest do not exist.

It is J. J. Bikerman's question which is troublesome. The heart of affirmative action is preferential treatment *short* of preferential hiring (special recruitment, training, adjustment of tests and standards). In addition, personnel evaluation is a notably inexact science so that it seems to me that there is room within the merit principle for leaning toward a qualified black applicant, if it seems close to a toss-up, and if the given work force seems to need that kind of adjustment. But Mr. Bikerman raises a more general question: Does this society owe the black man some special treatment, even within the bounds of the merit system? I think it does, but I also think that the source of this debt has become muddied. Fixing the responsibility for historical group trauma is a delicate enough business; it must be differentiated from the responsibility for advancing the welfare of all the current poor and underprivileged. In that sense, our affirmative-action programs may indeed be getting out of hand.

An assignable act of atrocity was committed against the American blacks by this society: they were brought here and enslaved. An assignable act of atrocity was committed against the American Indians by this society. In both cases, the group oppression was so total, and so assignable to this society, and the consequences for the present generation so apparent, that it is a legitimate if unusual piece of enlightenment for this society to try to provide some special group-oriented remedy, some affirmative action that stays within the basic structures of democratic life.

Other currently underprivileged population groups came here voluntarily, often from even less privileged positions. They have also been treated badly and in a discriminatory fashion here, and society does owe them equal treatment and equal opportunity on every level; but it does not owe them the same historic debt it owes the American blacks and Indians. Likewise, this society did not commit an assignable act of atrocity against women as a group. Women are owed equal treatment, which they have not been getting, but they are not owed preferential treatment. If we don't maintain that distinction, the principle of affirmative action does become absurd. All of us are less than we might have been—or more than we might have been—because of circumstances long buried in history.

More on ACLU

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s rebuttal to my response to his article [Letters from Readers, March] is even more outrageous than his original article ["Politics & ACLU," December 1971]. Mr. Bishop writes: "By Mr. Neier's own account—and I think it probable that he has scraped up whatever there was to scrape up—there is exactly one current case out of more than 2,200 in which an affiliate—not ACLU itself—is representing a right-wing client."

There is no such account by me. In fact, in the past year or so we have had almost 90 cases on behalf of right-wing clients. The groups whose rights we have supported include the National Renaissance party, the Ku Klux Klan, the White Power Movement, Young Americans for Freedom, the Milwaukee police union (in its right to support a law-and-order candidate for district attorney), the John Birch Society, the National States Rights party, Fighting American Nationalists, the National Socialist White People's party (Nazi party in Virginia), the American Independence party (Wallace party in Ohio), National Guardsmen subpoenaed by the Scranton Commission to testify about the Kent State killings, the American Legion Auxiliary, the White People's party, PANO (a right-wing policemen's organization in New Orleans), and the Waterbury (Connecticut) policemen's union.

Then there is Mr. Bishop's language about "an affiliate—not ACLU itself." For Mr. Bishop's information, these state affiliates are the ACLU itself. Each state affiliate is responsible for all litigation arising in its own state. The national office backs up affiliate litigation, but normally becomes more directly involved in litigation only under the following circumstances:

1) When there is no state affiliate with clear jurisdiction. Examples are recent cases on behalf of American soldiers stationed in Vietnam, West Germany, or England, and cases dealing with FCC policies.

2) When a state affiliate seeks special help.

3) When a case goes to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Less than 10 per cent of all ACLU cases fall into these categories.

Most of our cases on behalf of right-wing clients involve interferences with their right to assemble or denials of public employment because of right-wing associations. These are the kinds of cases which are the day-to-day work of our state affiliates.

Mr. Bishop has also suggested that these kinds of cases are not handled by the New York CLU. That is simply more of Mr. Bishop's nonsense. The single individual who has been most frequently represented by NYCLU in the last several years is James Madole, the leader of a group known as the National Renaissance party. Before Madole, the person who probably qualified for this distinction was George Lincoln Rockwell. The NYCLU, like many ACLU affiliates, is constantly involved in the defense of the rights of policemen—whether of their right to engage in political action, to be members of the John Birch Society, or not to be subjected to electronic eavesdropping.

Almost every other sentence by Mr. Bishop contains comparable distortions and would require similar space for correction. Mr. Bishop is either woefully ignorant about the ACLU or maliciously untruthful or both. But I am tired

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of Mr. Bishop and will not respond further.

ARYEH NEIER
Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union
New York City

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. writes:

The tone of Aryeh Neier's latest squeal of rage seems to me more offensive, not to say juvenile, than is proper for a controversy in the pages of a magazine like COMMENTARY. He resorts too readily to personal abuse whenever he runs out of rational arguments. But this letter is at least comparatively free of the McCarthyism which disfigured his original "response," which, incidentally, has been distributed to and dutifully reprinted by a number of the affiliates' publications, and has even appeared in Nicholas von Hoffman's column in the Washington *Post*.

Now Mr. Neier says that "in the past year or so we [meaning ACLU and all of its affiliates] have had almost 90 cases on behalf of right-wing clients." He includes as right-wingers both policemen and National Guardsmen, which strikes me as a pretty sweeping generalization. But let us assume, giving Mr. Neier's ambiguities the benefit of every doubt, that all cops and guardsmen are right-wingers, that all of the almost 90 "cases" involve actual litigation, and furthermore that they are all current. This adds up to 90 out of 2,200 cases in litigation, or 4.09 per cent—hardly a very impressive figure.

Mr. Neier does not claim that ACLU, the national organization, which was the main subject of my criticism, has intervened in any of these 90 cases, although the laws of statistical probability would suggest that some of them must meet his stated criteria for participation by ACLU at least as well as the Berrigan case and many others in which ACLU *has* intervened. Mr. Neier, speaking for the national management, takes credit for the affiliates' record (such as it is) in defending right-wingers, when he says "these state affiliates are ACLU itself." But ACLU, the national organization, is by any test a separate entity, with its own constitution, its own board of directors, its own Policy Guide, its own regional offices, its own money, and most especially its own staff. It exists and acts independently of the affiliates, as they exist and act independently of it. Their record in defending right-wingers' constitutional rights, as stated by Mr. Neier, although far from impressive, is no doubt somewhat better than the national body's. (Incidentally, I did *not* say that right-wingers' cases are not handled by the NYCLU—although I am skeptical of the proposition that they form a substantial part of its business.)

I cannot phrase it better than did Claire Cooper, ACLU's Director of Public Relations, in a letter to me, dated May 20, 1971: "The ACLU is now 49 organizations—national and 48 affiliates—constitutionally required to act with 'unity but not uniformity.' Each branch is free to formulate its own policies and programs, and we have no systematic means of internal reporting. Our legal cases alone number in the thousands. . . . The task of just finding out what we are doing is literally an impossible one." If this is true, as I assume it is, then ACLU as defined by Mr. Neier would be virtually immune to rational criticism. Therefore I chose to focus on the national organization, which seemed to me the most important of the 49—the fugleman, so to speak—and whose policies, actions, and propaganda I thought I could sort out from those of the affiliates. I think I did. (I may add that if both Mr. Neier and Miss Cooper are right, if the 49, to say nothing of all the local chapters, are considered as a single organism whose head doesn't know what the rest of the animal is doing, there is a distressing similarity to brontosaurus, functioning through a series of spinal ganglia.)

I do not say that I am tired of Mr. Neier, for that would be discourteous, but I am a little weary of answering muddled, obfuscating arguments. I think there is now more than enough on COMMENTARY's record to enable readers to make up their own minds about the justice of my criticisms.

Forster's Stature

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Cynthia Ozick's essay on E. M. Forster ["Forster as Homosexual," December 1971] seems to me so brilliant, so penetrating, so—in almost every respect—*right*, that I feel somewhat querulous in offering any objection at all. However.

Let me begin at the end, with Miss Ozick's revaluation of Forster's famous statement about betrayal. This declaration (of which she omits—as is common, I grant, in quoting it—the first clause) occurs in an essay entitled "What I Believe," written in 1939. Forster does not believe, he says, in Belief. He looks about him with dismay at the carnage caused by the clash of Creed against Creed, but because he lives in an "Age of Faith," an "extremely unpleasant reality . . . bloody in every sense of the word," he has to "keep up my end of it." And where does he start? "With personal relationships." To "get a little order into the contemporary chaos," he declares, "I certainly can proclaim that I believe in personal relationships." He is asserting that sanity and order are to be sought—and cherished—in the private realm, and proceed, if they proceed at all, from there to the public. "Personal relations," he says, "are despised today. They are regarded as bourgeois luxuries, as products of a time of fair weather which is now past, and we are urged to get rid of them, and to dedicate ourselves to some movement or cause instead. *I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.*"

He goes on to say that "probably one will not be asked to make such an agonizing choice. Still there lies at the back of every creed something terrible and hard for which the worshiper may one day be required to suffer, and there is a terror and a hardness in this creed of personal relationships, urbane and mild though it sounds. Love and loyalty to an individual can run counter to the claims of the State. When they do—down with the State, say I, which means the State would down me."

I find it very difficult to read this passage and keep in mind, as Miss Ozick would have me do, that by "personal relationships" and "love and loyalty" he means homosexual attachments, and by "friend" he means that coy term by which homosexual "roommates" sometimes refer to each other. Whatever you may think of his conviction that personal loyalties should precede political ones (I like it well), I don't believe you can imagine him to mean by "friend" anything different from what you or I or anyone would

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An open letter to readers of Commentary

Norman Cousins
Two Dag Hammarskjold Plaza New York, New York 10017

My purpose in writing is to tell you that my colleagues and I have decided to launch a new magazine. The magazine will be published every two weeks. It will be called WORLD. It will be a world review of ideas, the arts, and the human condition.

Ever since I resigned from the Saturday Review, I have been thinking and dreaming about starting a magazine that, in a certain sense, would belong to its readers and editors.

Usually, new magazines call for a prodigious investment. The reason is that magazines are sold to the consumer at less than the cost of manufacture. What compounds this problem is that the standard way of building a subscription list is through sharply reduced introductory offers.

Little wonder that massive investment has usually been necessary to see a new magazine through to the point where introductory-offer readers can be graduated to full-rate subscribers. But outside investment can mean outside control – and this is something we want to avoid if we possibly can.

Our hope, therefore, is that we can find enough readers who are willing to take a chance on us by becoming long-term subscribers from the very outset.

We decided to put these hopes to the test. I am delighted to say that the responses thus far have been favorable beyond even our most extravagant expectations. As a result, we are scheduling our first issue for late Spring.

What about the magazine itself?

We believe that a magazine is essentially a reading, rather than a viewing, experience. In this sense, we will publish for a readership rather than a flippership.

We will address ourselves to people who attach high value to ideas and the creative arts. Our arena, however, will be the world. We will do more than report on books, plays, movies, music and the arts in just the United States alone. We will attempt to review and report on cultural events on a world scale – "cultural" being defined in its broadest sense.

We will write about the human condition at a time when the ability of human intelligence to meet its problems is being tested as never before.

Our hope is to see the world as the astronauts saw it – a beautiful wet blue ball possessing millions of factors in the delicate combination that makes life possible. Our dominant editorial concern, then, will be the proper care of the human habitat – protecting it against war, world environmental poisoning, overcrowding, or any of the things that indignify and humiliate human beings.

In this connection, I am pleased to announce that Buckminster Fuller, architect-philosopher-innovator, has joined the Board of Editors. He will preside over a major section of the magazine to be called "Planetary Management."

We will also give major attention to what we believe will be one of the most compelling issues in the years ahead – the squandering of human resources, far more costly than the waste of physical resources.

There is no point in talking about conservation of land unless we also talk about conservation of life.

I think I have said enough to indicate that the new magazine will direct its central editorial energies both to the enjoyment of creative living and to the pursuit of vital ideas. It is an error, however, to try to be too detailed about a magazine in advance of publication. A magazine has to describe itself, issue by issue.

The only thing we can be sure of at this point is that we are going to make plenty of mistakes. If we are lucky, they will be fruitful mistakes and the magazine will change for the better because of them. New magazines are not really invented or created in one piece. They evolve. They are the product of creative interaction between editors and readers.

It may be irresponsible, therefore, to try to tell a reader everything he may want to know about the nature of a magazine, its underlying philosophy, or its capacity for growth. What we can try to do, however, is to tell you something about our hopes, philosophy, and our approach – and to seek your help in achieving our aims.

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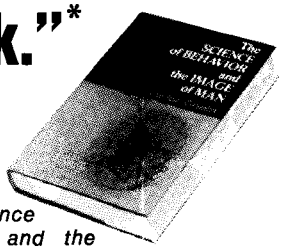

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Though it was not written as such, this book represents a major challenge to B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity.* Even as he upholds an uncompromising commitment to scientific method, Professor Chein finds a prominent place within the framework of scientific inquiry for both human freedom and human dignity.

Few psychologists, says Chein, pause to consider the philosophical underpinnings of their work, or they uncritically accept philosophies unsuited to their mission. In concentrating on processes, psychologists often lose sight of the acting human being. This explains why, in Chein's estimate, scientific psychology has produced little that is relevant to the humanities, so little, as he puts it, "that has lived up to psychology's promise to itself."

In what is surely a unique contribution to psychological thought, Professor Chein successfully bridges, concept by concept, the gap between scientific psychology and humanistic, existential, psychoanalytic psychology.

*R. R. Holt, Professor of Psychology, New York University

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mean by it—someone we loved and wished, above all else, not to betray.

Maurice, to be sure, contains a passage about a "friend." Early on, the youthful Maurice dreams: "He scarcely saw a face, scarcely heard a voice say, 'That is your friend,' and then it was over, having filled him with beauty and taught him tenderness. He could die for such a friend, he would allow such a friend to die for him; they would make any sacrifice for each other, and count the world nothing, neither death nor distance nor crossness could part them, because 'this is my friend.'"

If ever there has been set on paper the epitome of the ideal of the homosexual "friend," here it is. In a dream. Dreamed in, as Miss Ozick so perfectly points out, a fairy tale. The meaning of the word "friend" here is absolutely clear. The meaning of the same word in the passage I have quoted from "What I Believe" is, I believe, and as I have already stated, equally clear and absolutely different.

But what happens if we try to equate them? First and most obviously, we must answer Miss Ozick's question, "Does it devalue the large humanistic statement to know that its sources are narrowly personal?," just as she does: "Yes." We might add, "!," and "*Devalue* it? It renders it ludicrous." And that is too bad, because it is an interesting and courageous idea (my interpretation, not Miss Ozick's), and deserves our consideration. But worse trouble lies ahead. If we decide that by the term "friend" Forster could mean only one thing—that is, that he was incapable of talking at one time and context within and about his homosexuality, and at another outside and apart from it—then unpleasant problems arise in the evaluation (or, in the light of *Maurice,* revaluation) of the rest of his work. Are these "narrowly personal sources" to be read into it all? Has *Maurice* provided some sort of master *clef* that will unlock the surprise secret: he was writing about homosexuals all the time?

We have been familiar in the recent past with the charge that a form of literature has arisen—particularly though not exclusively for the stage—in which homosexual themes and situations are tricked out in heterosexual, family, marital dress, and presented as "straight" goods. (This is a bit passé now, of course, the clanging of so many closet doors being flung wide stridently rebuking the putative tradition of genteel deception.)

Are we to locate Forster somewhere early in this dubious tradition? A gifted novelist with a single vision which, whatever the apparent subject matter, would out and out—and eventually, when he *told all*—cause everything to mean something different from what we had thought?

What shall we make of *Howards End*? If he was incapable of using "friend" in two truly different senses, how are we to evaluate his descriptions of the personal relationships in this (or any other) novel? Are they not seriously suspect? If homosexual yearning and conflict and anguish and guilt—and resignation—lay behind it all, how can we trust him on love, courtship, marriage, sisterhood, fatherhood, sonhood—how can we trust him, above all, to tell us about men and women, and especially men and women together? Well, fair enough, say I. Don't trust him. I wouldn't, given the credentials of *Maurice.* But, read *Howards End.* Doubt is dispelled. He *knew.*

Miss Ozick also admires *Howards End*—compares it with *Middlemarch,* calling them both the "prototypical English Wisdom Novel—wisdom in the category of the way-things-really-are, the nest of worms exposed below the surface of decency." Of course they are both that—first-rate, detailed, comprehensive sociological newsletters, each reporting its own particular 19th-century period and social context, and each brilliantly conceived and artfully written.

Is that why George Eliot's and E. M. Forster's reports on English life are regarded as incomparable novelistic classics? Not likely. I suspect they are so regarded because however gifted these extraordinary writers were as sociologists, however trenchantly Forster, as Miss Ozick says, "impaled English mores in the house-hunting habits of Mr. Wilcox, and wrote of the money-and-property mentality in such a way as to dishevel it permanently," and however perceptively George Eliot examined the hypocrisy, the corruptibility—and corruptingness—of provincial Victorian society in the early 1830's, the reason we cherish these books today is that their authors were psychologists and metaphysicians

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(with good ears)—that is, *novelists*, and that their superb sociological achievements are inseparable from (and certainly not primary to) their novelistic vision.

Like all good sociologist-historians, both Eliot and Forster tell us a great deal about what life was like and why, in the setting each wrote about; but like the great novelists they both are, they bring us much news of ourselves. Devoted social critics though they both were, they contrived to allow the characters in their novels to address us directly, across historical change and disruption—or rather, they, through (and outside) their characters, address us directly, speaking of issues no change or disruption has yet really changed: passion, greed, foolishness, pride, loyalty, guilt, love—and all the other homely, eternal concerns that constitute our lives as they did theirs, the characters, the authors.

But it doesn't hold up. Odds and inconsistency are against it. Why should Forster tell us anything, especially anything both surprising and true, indeed how should he *know* anything about what he manifestly could not know? I can offer no answer to that reasonable question beyond this: I don't know how he knew what he knew, but I know that others have known things they had no objective "experiential right" to know. Think of writing for and about children, for example. Memory may or may not be useful. It's universally available, of course, but only occasionally fruitful—without the intervention and interpretation of imagination. Really, imagination is all. Having children of one's own confers no special wisdom—in the *writing*; think of those finest writers for children who never had any: Lewis Carroll, Beatrix Potter, C. S. Lewis; think of those childless writers who wrote *about* children: Henry James, George Eliot, George Meredith, Samuel Butler, Charlotte Bronte; think of E. M. Forster writing about fatherhood and sonhood (read *Where Angels Fear to Tread*). I shall not offer more lists of names, but, as categories, think of the men who have written about women, women about men, young about old, poor and rich about rich and poor, and yes, oh yes, black about white and white about black. All disallowed? All constricted—crippled perhaps?—by "narrowly personal sources"?

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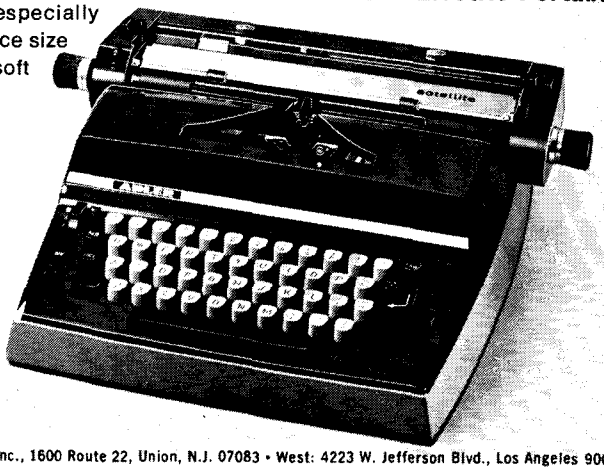

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Well, perhaps so, and so much the worse for both literature and life. But what if not? What if it is true that writers of all sorts have written accurately and revealingly about matters they could not have "known"? *How do they know?* They transcend the "narrowly personal sources" by which every one of us is in some particular way bound, and leap out, imaginatively, into another reality, grasp it in some conceptual or aesthetic form, and offer it to us in whatever mode serves their gifts and their perceptions. Novels served Forster; essays, too, yielded their possibilities to his style and thought.

I do not know how or why such imaginative leaps occur—to anyone. In a sense they are miraculous, whether in life or art. (And both depend upon them, utterly.) Miracles of the power of imagination. And I suppose I believe the proper attitude toward miracle is gratitude. That we now know, with the (less than miraculous) *Maurice*, how far and how heroically Forster had to leap to escape the fetters of his own "sources," makes his achievement, in his best work, more deserving of our gratitude, less of our suspicions. (Trust the fiction, not the life.) Miss Ozick does not love him enough—for what he *did* do.

ANNE FARBER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read *Maurice* and then read Cynthia Ozick's essay, and I must say that I do not feel Miss Ozick dealt with the book I read. I do not think that homosexual men (or women) are "sterile" any more than heterosexual men (or women) are "fertile," and I don't find Forster thinking of people in these terms. The heterosexual Clive whom Maurice confronts at the novel's end is someone on the other side of the looking glass, a mirror-image not a *paterfamilias*.

Two other points: To announce that if Forster were alive he would not be a member of the Gay Liberation Movement is not a service. Miss Ozick's clairvoyance is shared by . . . Joseph Epstein in his review of *Maurice* in the New York *Times*. For better or worse, the people on the other side of the looking glass—those in the Gay Liberation Movement—have received the exact opposite message. They have not, however, shared Miss Ozick's and Mr. Epstein's absolute conviction of being able to speak for the dead.

Miss Ozick's ability to detect "early signs of affinity between anti-Semitism and Gay Liberation" on the basis of a book review by Gore Vidal should not go unremarked. Mr. Vidal, whatever his merits or demerits, his pro- or anti-Semitism, is (a) officially "bi-" and not "homo-" sexual and (b) not a member of, or spokesman for, the Gay Liberation Movement to the best of my knowledge, and I have been working on an anthology of all pertinent writings of the movement. . . .

LEO SKIR

New York City

CYNTHIA OZICK writes:

Lionel Trilling begins his book about Forster with this observation: "E.M. Forster is for me the only living novelist who can be read again and again and who, after each reading, gives me what few writers can give us after our first days of novel-reading, the sensation of having learned something." To this statement another can be added, virtually a corollary: Forster is also one of those very few writers (and since Forster's death, there is none now living) who excite competitive passions—possessive rivalries, in fact —among serious readers, each of whom feels uniquely chosen to perceive the inner life of the novels.

In recent years Forster has grown thinner for me, especially as essayist. Not that I would now deny Forster's powers or his brilliance, or claim that the masterpieces are not masterpieces, still giving out, as Trilling said almost thirty years ago, "the sensation of having learned something." But what we learn from the novels is not what we learn from the essays. The novels do not preach morality and the essays, in their way, do. Or, to put it differently, the novels preach a novelistic morality—in the early ones, the ethics of Spontaneity; in *A Passage to India*, the anti-ethics of a mystical nihilism. But the essays —preeminently "What I Believe," which Anne Farber cites—tell us how we are to go about living from moment to moment. "Where do I start?" Forster asks. And answers: "With personal relationships." Of this approach Mrs. Farber says: "I like it well."

I do not, because it strikes me as incomplete and self-indulgent. Nevertheless I recognize Mrs. Farber's tone—it was once mine, and I think we can spot our erstwhile psychological twins—at the end of her letter, when she concludes that I do "not love [Forster] enough—for what he *did* do." I withdraw from the contest and agree that Mrs. Farber is right. She *does* love Forster's ideas and qualities, if not more than I once did, certainly more than I do now.

And the reasons I have, so to speak, fallen out of love with Forster are the very reasons she is still in thrall to him. A novelist, as she says, is both psychologist and metaphysician (and social historian). That is why we become most attached to those novels which give us an adequate account of the way the world seems to us. Novelists interpret us, and when we "choose" a novelist we are really choosing a version of ourselves. The same is true of essayists. What I no longer choose to choose among Forster's ideas is "Only Connect," which signifies, of course, "personal relationships." When I said in my piece that it devalued "the large humanistic statement to know that its sources are narrowly personal," I was not referring to Forster's novelistic imagination (of course the women in his novels are women and not disguised male homosexuals), but to his liberalism. We are now unambiguously apprised of Forster's homosexuality, and *Maurice* makes it shudderingly plain that Forster considered homosexuality to be an affliction, the ineradicable mark of a fated few. To use language grown rusty from repetition, he regarded himself as part of an oppressed minority; and, applying Only Connect, he could stand in for and champion other oppressed minorities—Indians under English colonialism, for instance, who suffered from the English public-school mentality precisely as he had suffered from it. But this, after all, is a compromised liberalism. There is nothing admirable in it; it is devalued by the presence of the vested interest. It is no trick, after all, for a Jew to be against anti-Semitism, or for a homosexual to be against censorship of homosexual novels. The passion behind the commitment may be pure, but the commitment is not so much a philosophy of liberalism as it is of self-preservation. Morality must apply some more

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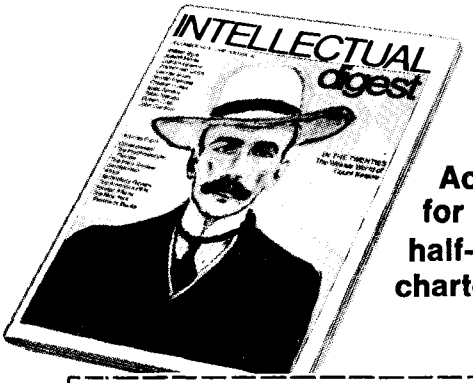

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accessible standard than personal hurt. In *Howards End* Mr. Wilcox, disapproving of Helen's affair with Leonard Bast, gets his nose rubbed in a reminder of his own affair, long ago, with Mrs. Bast: what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. But suppose the gander has had no sauce? I am not a homosexual; if I had been in England in 1935, should I not have been disturbed by the law which interfered with the untrammeled publication of *Boy*, as Forster was? (See his essay "Liberty in England.") Liberalism, to be the real thing, ought to be disinterested.

But the inadequacy of Only Connect—that it is *not* disinterested—is not the whole of my charge against "personal relationships" as the ultimate moral standard. Deciding your behavior person by person (Forster was apparently the inventor of an early form of situation ethics) seems to me a localized, partial, highly contingent, catch-as-catch-can sort of morality. "This is my friend; I love him; therefore I will not kill him" is, in my view, inferior to saying, once and for all, "Thou shalt not kill." The reason is not simply that the overall Commandment is relatively more efficient than figuring it out one person at a time as you go along, but also that it is more reliable. "This is my friend; I love him" can too easily turn into "This was my friend; now I hate him." And if that is all there is to it, if there is no larger motive than "personal relationships" to govern human behavior, one might as well kill him. It is not only that "Love and loyalty to an individual can run counter to the claims of the State" (though the single example Forster can think of to illustrate this possibility is Brutus and Cassius vis-à-vis Caesar, not exactly the sort of situation that one is likely to encounter on an everyday basis)—it is also, as Forster himself recognizes, that love and loyalty can run counter to themselves; in short, they rot. They are "a matter for the heart, which signs no documents." That is why, taking up—as Forster himself does—the question of reliability, and writing about these matters on stone some four thousand years before Forster, Moses thought that having it down on a document might not be a bad idea. "But reliability," Forster sensibly answers Moses, "is not a matter of contact—that is the main difference between the world of personal relationships and the world of business relationships." It is also one of the differences between personal relationships and universal ethics. To Forster, Moses comes out a businessman with a contract, and in the same essay (we are still in "What I Believe") he says he prefers Montaigne and Erasmus. "My temple stands," he asserts, "not upon Mount Moriah but in that Elysian Field where even the immoral are admitted." It is not a very great distance from an Elysian Field that makes no distinction between innocents and murderers (for we have a right to take the persons Forster calls "immoral" at their most extreme) to the *ou-boum* of the Marabar Caves, which swallows up both good and evil into one of the unknown black holes of the universe, similarly without distinction. The problem with Forster's "personal relationships"—or, to use Mrs. Farber's term, his personal loyalties—is that they tend to slip away at the first intrusion of something spooky or ineffably cosmic—of something, in brief, that suggests his notion of Religion, which is pagan in the sense of fearful, imbued with the uncanniness of *lacrimae rerum,* un-human, without relation to the world of men. When Mrs. Moore in the cave hears the *ou-boum* of nothingness, she "lost all interest, even in Aziz [who had become her good friend], and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air's."

Mrs. Moore in the Marabar Caves is obviously an extreme example of the dissolution of a friendship. But Forster, as we know, is fond of extremes, so it is not too much to say that Mrs. Moore is also an extreme example of someone who—quoting Mrs. Farber quoting Forster—"hate[s] the idea of causes." Her hatred of causes does not strengthen her in friendship. She betrays her friend by losing interest in him, because the universe has shown her that it is impersonal, and that friendship and betrayal and loss are all the same to it. She has no "cause"—no motivation, no ideal contract—which restricts her from betraying her friend. Forster's dedication to personal relationships without contract is doomed to work only very rarely, not only because friendship succeeds only very rarely, but because it is, in a world of friends and non-friends, not enough. "Do not lie about your friend, whom you love" is, in moral distance, a light-year from "Do not tell lies about anyone at all"—or, as it is more commonly formulated, "Do not bear false witness." A contractual, or communal, ethics, when violated, at least leaves the standard intact. A catch-as-catch-can ethics, based on your feelings for your friend, leaves everything in a shambles when it is violated. A case can of course be made that Forster's ethics of privacy derives through Romanticism with its discovery of the Individual from Non-Conformism with its emphasis on regulating personal morality through conscience. Whatever their sources, though, the moral and political positions that emerge from "What I Believe" seem to me to be disturbingly partial. They may do a certain credit to the sensibility of a hurt man who knows enough to be thoughtful about the hurts of others, but they fail of universal application. Forster never comes head-on against the problem of how to get the "bloods" to behave less callously. Or, rather, he dodges the problem by loading it: by giving Mr. Wilcox an old affair to hide, by making Maurice a homosexual. His whole men turn out not to be whole at all; Forster appears incapable of accepting the *principle* of not hurting without first making a hurt felt. His humanity goes from wound to wound. His politics, his morality, ultimately his liberalism, all signify the humanism of cripples. It is too thin. The thugs escape.

The difficulty with Mrs. Farber's letter, I think, is that she mixes up these specific questions raised by Forster's political and moral positions with a general analysis of the novelistic imagination. Her description of the "miracle" of the fictive imagination is superb and very nearly complete, but I am puzzled about why she has introduced it. My judgment on Forster's humanism does not lead logically to any judgment on his capacity to imagine. If I believe, as I do, that Forster's sense of himself as a kind of martyr taints the candor of his liberalism with a hidden self-interest, how does this relate to Mrs. Farber's notion that I somehow also believe the novels to be homosexual disguises? They are obviously

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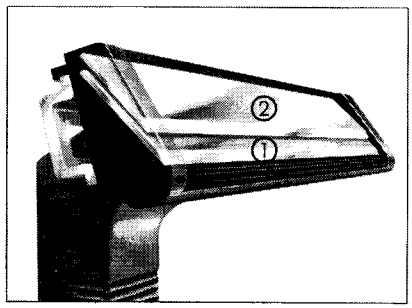

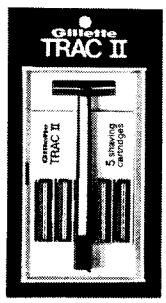

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not homosexual disguises. Nothing in what I wrote suggested they might be. That there are in Forster's fiction men with homosexual tendencies was always clear and is now clearer. A pair of obvious examples: Ricky and Ansell, Aziz and Fielding. Revisited in the aftermath of *Maurice* (I have, for instance, been rereading *A Passage to India*), they have new resonances; so does the passionate "friend" in the essay called "Notes on the English Character" (1920), who is an adumbration of Aziz as Forster himself in that essay is an adumbration of Fielding. As for Forster's use of the word "friend": until some industrious clod of a graduate student gives us the definitive concordance for that word in Forster's *oeuvre*, we shall not know how often he intended it wistfully and how often straightforwardly. But until we get the concordance, we will have to rely on impressions—and my impression is that it is a word Forster most often uses wistfully. I feel certain—it is an impression—that the friend for whom Forster would betray his country is thought of wistfully. When you betray your country, that is treason, a capital offense. Betraying your country for your friend, you die. I quote Mrs. Farber quoting Maurice in a passage she herself calls "the epitome of the homosexual 'friend' ": "He could die for such a friend . . . they would make any sacrifice for each other, and count the world nothing." Maurice would betray his country for such a friend; Forster is largely indistinguishable from Maurice; and yet Mrs. Farber writes, "I don't believe you can imagine him to mean by 'friend' anything different from what you or I or anyone would mean by it." My impression is otherwise.

But all this is about friendship between men. Against the rest—Mrs. Farber's catalogue of "love, courtship, marriage, sisterhood, fatherhood, sonhood"—nothing can be insinuated. Forster believed, as I have said, in Demeter, the most domestic of all the goddesses.

So two cheers for Forster's Friendship. "Two cheers are quite enough," Forster remarked of Democracy, saving his third for "Love the Beloved Republic." If, as Mrs. Farber asserts, I do not love Forster enough for what he has done, it is not because I fail to celebrate his novelistic imagination, but rather because I would dislike living in his Republic, where personal relationships govern (one might dare to say seethe) and there are no communal contracts. I save half my third cheer for the Covenant; and the other half, following Forster in all his novels but the last, for Demeter.

In reply to Leo Skir: World-shaking news: men can't make babies with men, women can't make babies with women. *That* much, it would seem, Mr. Skir and I and all the rest of us ought to be able to agree on. Whatever else can "sterile" and "fertile" mean? Metaphorical fertility doesn't lead to dirty diapers. If Mr. Skir does not "find Forster thinking in these terms," he must become reacquainted with the meaning of Gino's baby in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Helen's baby in *Howards End*, Stephen's child in *The Longest Journey*; he must think again about the meditation on fertility in *A Room with a View*, and the explicit passage on sterility in *Maurice*. Mr. Skir has read Forster only superficially; otherwise he is obtuse—or, worse, means to use a writer tendentiously.

If the last is true, it is especially unfortunate that Mr. Skir chooses Forster to politicize. Honest literary criticism is not engaged in for the purpose of performing services for movements. And in Forster's case it is not necessary for anyone to speak for the dead (is this, by the way, what Mr. Skir thinks literary criticism *is*?), since the living Forster spoke for himself vigorously enough: "I hate the idea of causes." Is this a statement likely to lead to dues-paying Gay Lib membership? It is especially difficult to imagine Forster wishing to politicize friendship or sex. Indeed, *A Passage to India* culminates in a plea for the de-politicization of friendship.

But if, like Mr. Skir, homosexual men and women determine to politicize their own friendships and sexuality into a movement, they must not be surprised at finding themselves stuck with the consequences—the entire range of possible consequences—exactly like Rockefeller or Lindsay or Wallace. Politics is not poetry. What sensitive people, however sexually inclined, ought to regret about the Gay movement is precisely this: that it took love and sex and friendship and out of them made only another political party.

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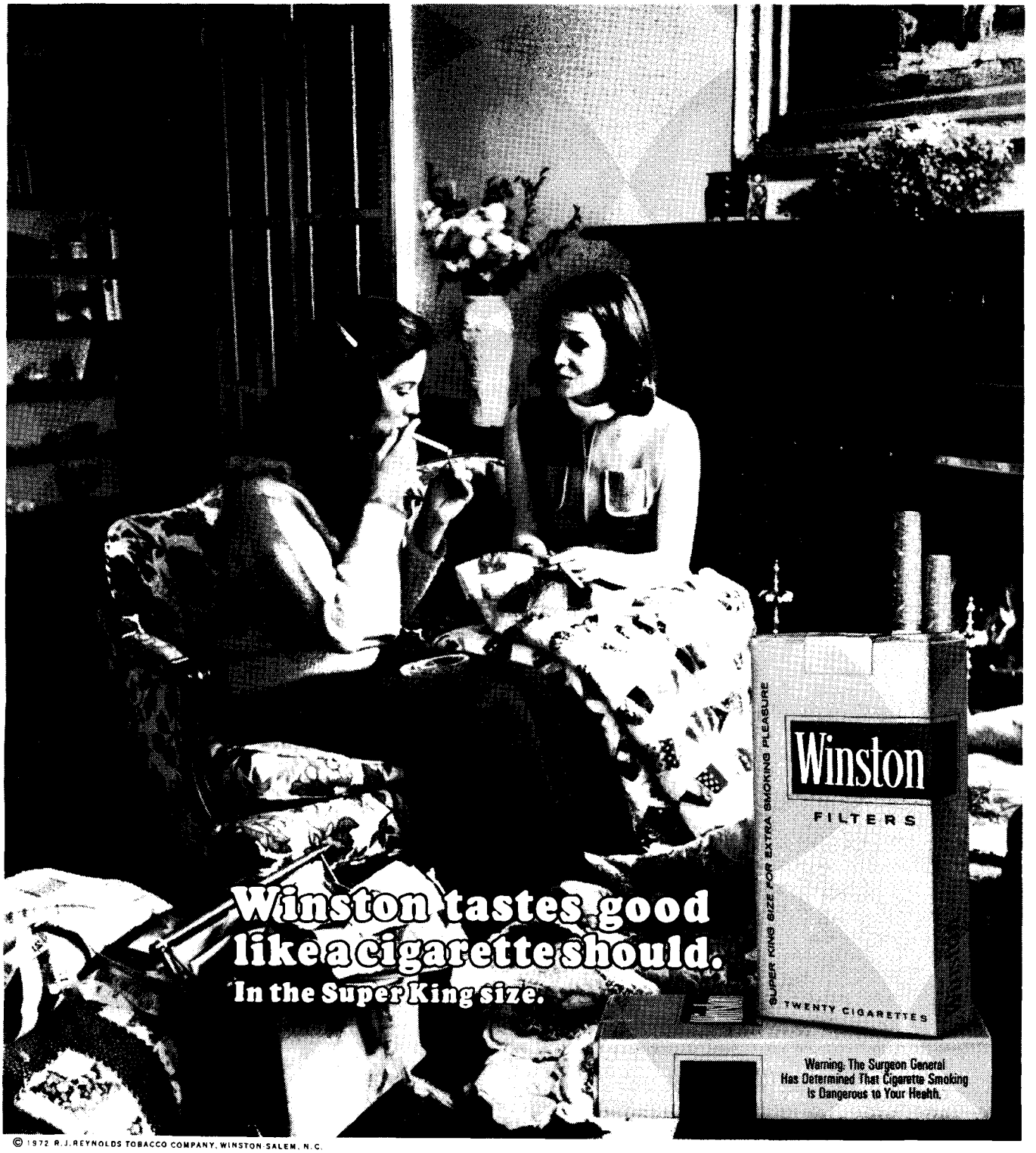

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The Population Controllers

Samuel McCracken

"I'LL never have any children. Who'd want to bring one into this overpopulated world, anyway?" Thus spoke a child of our time some months ago, meeting the press after her conviction on a charge of abortion. Charity will doubtless attribute to circumstance the hyperbole implicit in her question—the population problem is so acute that *no one ought to be born*—but with less excuse many another in the burgeoning population-control movement speaks with extravagance nearly equal. Even though everyone knows that extravagance and intellectual fad are inextricably linked, the absurdities governing the thinking of many in the current population-control movement are likely to prove far more important to the course of society than almost any amount of counter-cultural nonsense. For the population alarmists tend to be as a group far straighter than the other sorts (and hence far more likely to prove influential with the average man), and they have begun, unlike the New Left in its day, to propose some very specific political rearrangements, most of them pretty nasty, wherewith to embody their programs. Indeed, few of the people busy declaring emergencies these days have been as precise in telling us what the emergency requires us to do, few (as a group) more likely to get a hearing outside their own proximate True Believers.

I

THE man at the local office of Zero Population Growth, Inc. assured me that Paul R. Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb** is what started it all, and whether or not this is strictly so, the book was the first best-seller to set forth the dogma of the movement, and little has been added except by way of extravagance in the nearly four years since its appearance. I say *dogma* by design, for Ehrlich's claims have attained something approaching dogmatic status within the movement and perhaps by now outside it as well.

The main elements of the dogma are simply stated. A situation of crisis has been created by the rapid and worldwide increase of population, for it is not likely that the earth's resources can satisfy the needs of such an unprecedentedly large and constantly expanding humanity. Double the population and you will need, broadly speaking, to double everything else. You will need to serve up, if you wish to keep everyone as well off, twice as many slices of pie the same size; such a doubling is a formidable task, and it is likely that you will fail in the attempt, and end up serving smaller slices. The failure will be most obvious with respect to food, the supply of which cannot be indefinitely increased to keep up with the geometrical rate of population increase. But the same mathematics will apply, less sensationally, to all nonrenewable resources; for each there is a limit beyond which an increasing population will begin to reduce the shares in a trend heading toward zero. Nor is this formula restricted to resources: one must, for a doubled population, also double the rate of manufacture. Even could such increases be achieved, they would exacerbate the whole range of environmental difficulties—especially pollution—that already bedevil society to an intolerable degree.

But the relation of resource to need is only one aspect of the problem. There are difficulties arising out of the proportion of people to area, the question of density pure and simple. For when people live together in numbers too great for a given area, the overcrowding thus induced causes the very fabric of society to be rent. It is in the teeming cities and gargantuan campuses that violence breaks out, for it is there that humans huddle together, compacted quite beyond their natural tolerance for each other. Since the surface of the earth is finite, the only solution to the prob-

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN teaches literature and the humanities at Reed College in Oregon. Among Mr. McCracken's previous contributions are "Quackery in the Classroom" (June 1970), "The Drugs of Habit and the Drugs of Belief" (June 1971), and "Apocalyptic Thinking" (October 1971).

*Ballantine (paperback), 223 pp., 95¢; for additional information and documentation, see also *Population, Resources, Environment: Issues in Human Ecology*, Paul R. and Ann H. Ehrlich (Freeman, 381 pp., $8.95), and *How to Be a Survivor: A Plan to Save Spaceship Earth*, Paul R. Ehrlich and Richard L. Harriman (Ballantine, 208 pp., $1.25).

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lem of density is the reversal of population growth and ultimately the reduction of its absolute level.

Thus the world is seen as menaced by a plague of people. In the undeveloped countries this human disease threatens to annihilate through starvation; in the developed ones, through pollution and social collapse. The sorts of cures now being proposed for such a disease are quite as heroic as one might expect, but they may easily be expressed in a form suitable for framing on a poster, and I hereby make the population-control movement a gift of my version: Fewer People, Less Doing.

Is THIS a slogan under which the world should march? To begin with, I presume that no one argues the possibility of infinite population growth in a finite universe; we must all agree that the world as a whole may at some point become overpopulated. We can further agree that any area which cannot feed its population is, so long as it cannot, overpopulated by definition. Thus far, the population controllers seem to have an impeccable case. Yet it is not, one notices, simply Bangladesh alone which is said by the movement to be overpopulated, but also the United States of America.

It is a phenomenon common enough in our time to wonder whether one is living in the same universe as the writers one reads. Consider, for example, James Simon Kunen on America:

> Suddenly, we have become aware of the dirt. The whole nation is *filthy,* the very air of the United States *stinks,* our rivers are *fouled* with poisons, we are buried in *garbage,* everything pure and natural is *dying.* [Emphasis his.]

Where on earth is the United States he is talking about? Such hysteria can perhaps be comprehended in the mind of someone who lives at the mouth of the Hudson and has never been anywhere else. But Mr. Kunen has been elsewhere, even to Hyannis, Massachusetts. He must, one suspects, have flown across the country on a clear day and noticed all the unspoiled emptiness west of the Mississippi. Whatever *he* may have done, I have bicycled of a Sunday morning in Portland, Oregon, and in a couple of hours' ride found roads where the occasional power line is the only suggestion that the 19th century has ended.

Similarly, when someone asserts that the United States is overpopulated, I find myself wondering which United States he means. For the truth is that most Americans live at densities well below, sometimes startlingly so, the inhabitants of such well-conducted realms as Denmark and the Netherlands (which has a population density fifteen times greater than our own). The population density of the city of London in 1700 approached that of the Woodstock Festival, although it was admittedly spread out in several layers. On the other hand, it was less layered than that of modern Manhattan and yet nearly four times as great. And unbelievable as it may seem to a resident of Palo Alto, some pitiful Manhattan natives actually *prefer* living at extraordinary density, and would stay there even could they get exit visas to Oregon or Patchogue. (It is fairly common now to trot out the related but separable phenomenon of *crowding* and treat it as if it were identical or exactly proportional to density. It is not. A crowded college classroom or a crowded airliner or a crowded beach is less pleasant, even less functional, than a sparsely settled one. But population growth is not necessarily or even primarily the cause of this condition; general prosperity is.)

If, however, it is difficult to see in what sense the United States is overpopulated, it seems beyond doubt that parts of the undeveloped world do suffer from this problem (though by no means all of the undeveloped world, for Latin America and Africa are sparsely populated as compared with Asia or indeed with Europe). Short of conquering the undeveloped nations and forcing population control of an entirely ferocious sort upon them, it is not clear that the developed nations can do very much about the problem. This is the judgment of Ehrlich and the brothers Paddock,* who believe the most we can do is decide which nations will pull through without aid (not very many), which will be ravaged by famine no matter what (most), which can be saved with outside food shipments (a few). Further "Green Revolution" technology to increase food production may help and so may massive irrigation through the development of thermonuclear power plants. But it seems very likely that for the most part the undeveloped countries are going to have to solve their own (and real) population problem, and that the solution will inevitably have a good deal of famine in it.

Of THE two most common arguments *against* the necessity of population control, one is the fatuous claim that the problem of population will be solved by emigration into the universe. It is reasonably clear that no body within the solar system is adaptable to earthborn life, and ingenious schemes for "terraforming" bodies like the moon belong in science fiction, whence they derive. While it may well be that the other stars have suitable planets in their millions, the energy requirements—given any rational set of physical assumptions—of getting to the nearest extrasolar planet are so enormous as to preclude a mass emigration. Only fools imagine the stars as the dumping ground for excess population.

The other argument is a good deal more prob-

*William and Paul Paddock, *Famine 1995,* Little, Brown (paperback), 276 pp., $2.35.

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lematical. Recently in a stunning pamphlet by George Grier of the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies,* a new specter has been raised: the specter of an uncontrolled *decrease* in population. This vision, so at odds with that of Ehrlich and others, Grier arrives at through a close analysis of the 1970 census, wherein is revealed the surprising fact that in 1970 there were some three million fewer children under the age of four than there were in 1960, an absolute drop of 15.5 per cent. The surprise of this decrease (itself never before equaled and approached only by half in the Depression) is exacerbated by the fact that at the same time the most fertile part of the population, those between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, had *increased* in numbers by 52 per cent. As Grier himself puts it, ". . . the products of the post-World War II 'baby boom,' now grown to adulthood, are not having babies of their own at anything approaching the rate which was widely expected. They have in fact had so many fewer babies that they have thrown the baby population into decline." At the least, the present trend, if continued, would bring zero population growth in this century, for Grier estimates that sometime in 1972 at the latest, the total fertility rate will have declined to 2.1, the so-called replacement rate, which if maintained will lead inexorably to ZPG. Grier is adamant in refusing to predict such a maintenance (the reversal of the present trend would be no more unexpected than the trend itself), but it is a possibility we must keep in mind.

Indeed, even if the present trend should reverse itself (as it did slightly during the last two months of 1971) we will still be left with a sharp "notch" in the population age-profile, representing all the children who didn't get born between 1960 and 1970. Their absence will be felt in all those institutions designed to receive them or cater to their needs and whims: schools, toy factories, and the like, and the ever-increasing segment of the general economy devoted to youth. Adjusting to this change in profile, Grier points out, will be as difficult as adjusting to any other.

The force of Grier's work (which incidentally provides a model for announcing sensational developments without oneself becoming hysterical) is to show that the population problem is not as simple as Ehrlich would have it, and that the currently fashionable school of population control, by fixing attention on only a part of the question, may well be diverting us from the important business of contingency planning for a possible population decline. At the very least, Grier's study deflates the glib certainty of the population-control gospel; at most, it shows it to be off the right heading by a full 180°.

**The Baby Bust,* Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, 76 pp., $2.50.

II

To sum up so far: while the population controllers can be admitted to have got hold of an incontestable general truth, namely that population cannot go on expanding forever, this does not necessarily validate their judgments about the special case of any one country; nor is the precise location or extent of the overpopulation so simple a matter as their assurance would suggest. This alone should make us wary of the measures they propose to alleviate population pressures, and our wariness should increase triply when we take into account the unsettling form in which these proposals are put forward, and the particular habits of mind they reveal.

Although the measures, and the means proposed for implementing them, are varied, they add up in principle to the familiar cry of Any Means Necessary. Most desirable, of course, would be the decision by every couple to halt at a maximum of two children, a decision which if implemented would eventually lead to zero population growth. But should this decision not be taken, a series of measures running from the mildly to the ferociously coercive would be necessitated. We ought, first of all, to drop all pronatalist policies, of which the chief example in this country is the current income-tax structure, and any official encouragement of the notion that women find fulfillment in childbearing. From here we would, if need be, move to disincentives proper, such as breeding-taxes. Next would come legal restrictions on the size of families, enforced by fine, imprisonment, compulsory sterilization, and abortion. While no population-control authority explicitly prefers coercion to persuasion, some believe that coercion will in the course of things be required, and nearly all believe the crisis sufficient in dimension to justify it. None believes there is any inherent right to breed, any more than there is any right to multiple spouses.

Let us consider for a moment the issues of contraception and abortion. Ehrlich's position here is clear enough in general, hazy in particular. The state, in his view, should first of all warn its citizens of the impending crisis they face, and inform them of the means they can adopt to meet it; to this end, the state ought immediately to repeal all existing restrictions on contraception and abortion, and insure full access to birth-control information and devices. Ehrlich does not specifically advocate that government actually go into the contraceptive business, or offer free abortions, but he does look favorably on government-subsidized programs to make birth-control information and devices available to all. In this respect his position differs not in the least from that adopted by the national Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, whose report and recommendations have recently

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been issued.* As for abortion—which is, as the movement will never tire of telling us, the only 100-per-cent-effective contraceptive—Ehrlich believes, blandly enough, that it ought to be (legally speaking) a matter between a woman and her doctor. Here too his general position is echoed by the Commission on Population Growth.

If Ehrlich's position can be described (with more simplicity than insight) as a preference for a voluntary rather than a compulsory solution to the population problem, some of his "colleagues," as he is fond of calling them, go further. Martha K. Willing, for example, in *Beyond Conception*,† doubts that people are responsible enough to avail themselves of contraceptive services even if they were provided free by the government. An enlightened public policy, in her judgment, would view contraception and abortion merely as tools to be administered as required in pursuit of a well-directed program of population control. Thus, she proposes to make it a *crime* to have more than two children, a prohibition she would enforce by the tattooing of the biparous, by compulsory sterilization, and by compulsory abortion. Another of Ehrlich's "colleagues," Edgar Chasteen, obviating the problem of "unwanted" conception in the first place, proposes "inoculating" males and females against fertility at puberty.**

While the distance between the position of Ehrlich and that of Mrs. Willing and Dr. Chasteen seems on first glance immense, in fact all three inhabit a common moral universe. In objecting to government intervention in the contraceptive business, for example, Ehrlich takes his stand not on principle but solely on grounds of prudence, tempered by a crude anti-Washington bias. "The prospect," he says, "of an already inept, inefficient, and sometimes corrupt federal establishment moving directly into the reproductive lives of Americans can only be viewed with horror." *Our* government, he means, would botch the job; a more efficient, suave, or honest administration could be entrusted with the "reproductive lives of Americans." Similarly, to the ultimate of all measures for population control, treating the public water-supply system with contraceptives, he can muster but two objections: a) as yet it is technically not do-able, and b) political opposition by the unenlightened is likely to be too intense. Apart from these two inhibiting factors, he has no real disagreement with the intellectual content of such proposals, and he is forever pointing out cheerfully that they will in any event become necessary if we do not voluntarily swallow the medicine which he himself proffers.

My own opinion on the issue of contraception is that it is one of the questions on which the state must properly remain neutral, neither forbidding nor encouraging. Now, while the dismantling of 98 per cent of the government would be required were it forbidden to supply goods or services save those which all citizens would wish to acquire or take advantage of, it does seem hard that a citizen should be forced to pay for that which outrages him morally. Accordingly, any government ought to strive to keep the occasions when citizens are so taxed to the minimum, and even then only for the most compelling of general-welfare or common-defense considerations. This, it seems to me, is why the government should not itself get into the contraception business, either to forbid or to promote. If one believes there is a right to limit one's family, as I do, one will look rather more favorably upon government programs to make birth-control information and devices available. But even here, government programs are not the only way of accomplishing this objective, and the alternatives are surely politically preferable.

ABORTION, in particular, presents as perplexing a problem as can face any society, and one which is not likely to be illuminated by slogans concise enough to put on a poster ("A woman should have the right to control her own body"). My own tentative and agonized views on the subject, ironically enough, lead me to endorse the policy set forth by the more moderate population-control advocates while rejecting almost every argument they make for its support. That is, I end up unhappily believing with Ehrlich that abortion ought legally to be a matter between a woman, her husband, if any, and her doctor. Such an arrangement seems to me unfortunate in the extreme, but less so than the others I know about or can imagine, all of which contribute to the traffic in illegal abortions and have the effect not so much of preventing abortions as of making them unsafe or expensive or both.

The moral implications of abortion and contraception are still a highly controversial matter in our society, as well they should be. But one would be hard put to understand why this should be so from the population-control enthusiasts, who tend to believe that abortion, besides being legally available on demand, should be seen as morally indistinguishable from, say, amputation, and who generally refuse even to acknowledge the absence of consensus on whether or not a fetus is a human being. Indeed, the movement altogether is developing a number of morally very dubious positions which appear, in our time, unique to it. Most ambiguous of these is the

* The Report will be published by the Government Printing Office at the end of this monh; it is also available from New American Library (362 pp., $1.50).

†Gambit, 220 pp., $6.95.

**"The Case for Compulsory Population Control," *Mademoiselle*, January 1970. Reprinted in Daniel Callahan, ed., *The American Population Debate*, Doubleday, 377 pp., $8.95.

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quality-of-life, or lifeboat, argument. One cannot read very far into these authors without discovering affirmations of support for the quality of life rather than its quantity. This is not a very original line of thought, but it is a very dangerous one, and to understand why, one need only consider some of the milieus to which it is appropriate. Thus the idea that the quality of life is superior to its quantity must occur to the stronger two of any three starving men. While we do not know that any member of the Donner party was actually murdered for food purposes, we can hardly doubt that the idea must have occurred. Similarly, on a larger scale, a Himmler contemplating the starvation of millions in the occupied territories did so in the explicit belief that he was opting for racial quality over quantity. The difficulty, in short, is how to prevent any two people from deciding that any third person presents an intolerable threat to the quality of their life.

The quality-of-life advocates remind one of the elder Rockefeller justifying his business methods as being like growing the American Beauty rose, to the development of which must be sacrificed all neighboring and competing buds. The vegetable imagery is a little unsettling when applied even to something so qualifiedly human as a corporation, but a writer like Martha K. Willing has no difficulty in applying such metaphors to her fellow men and women. Mowing, she says, favors the pasture, not-mowing favors the weeds; setting the cutter too high on the mower will let the weeds grow. It is important to realize that the weeds she is talking about are *human beings*. But so vicious a metaphor becomes less surprising when one remembers that it comes out of a sensibility which proposes the tattooing of mothers of third children so that they can be easily identified. It is also a sensibility which can produce such thoughts as these on diabetes, diabetics, and the membrane of civilization:

> Genetic diabetes is increasing because insulin and its modern analogues protect these patients through childbearing. Fortunately, so long as *our* social protections are intact, *they* can be valuable and happy citizens. *We* can treat *them*. In a disruptive natural or unnatural disaster, this vulnerable population would not make it. Why then encourage or permit *them* to expand *their* numbers? [Emphasis added.]

It is possible to distinguish this passage from your stock National Socialist eugenics in one way only: Mrs. Willing does not think the defectives are limited to a particular race. But in this passage, as well as in a similar one about dwarfs, she has begun to think of a They allowed to live on sufferance by Us (though assuredly not when the enlightened take over). And yet with an entirely straight face Mrs. Willing can dedicate her book to one who "filled my childhood with . . . enjoyment of living things." Perhaps there is no irony there after all: to enjoy does not mean to respect, or even to allow to live. One can enjoy cattle on the platter.

In short, Ehrlich and his school are not *pure* population controllers. Purists would be willing to let a stabilized or reduced population do what it wanted with the space which had been secured for it. But not Ehrlich, who would save us not only from starvation, but from the squalor of what he sees as our present overfed existence, and lead us into an existence more pastorally innocent. Running through his work is that contempt for ordinary daily life which we encounter in many another popular prophet nowadays. Electricity, for example, costs too much to produce, socially speaking, and so away with all those frivolous gadgets that people don't really need and wouldn't want if they weren't brainwashed by advertising and propaganda. The trouble here is not Ehrlich's belief that much of what the American machine turns out is junk (I myself happen to agree with that judgment), but that he would enforce his standards on the world at large in the calm assurance that he knows what people need and want better than they do themselves. Ehrlich's astounding trust in his own righteousness comes out clearly in a passage like the following addressed to high-school students: ". . . you should make it clear that certain attitudes and behavior are socially unacceptable. If one of your classmates expresses a desire to have more than two natural children, inform him of the facts and make sure that he understands the seriousness of the situation. . . . You will be surprised how much impact the opinion of peers can have."

To match his instructions to students, Ehrlich lays down a rule of conduct for the university professor: "The population crisis must be an integral part of his own teaching, it is pertinent to *every* subject." While it is not clear just how this pertinence should be made manifest, it does seem clear that what is wanted is the conversion of classes into indoctrination sessions, a desire hardly unique to the population movement, but quite sufficiently widespread already.

Population-control enthusiasts, in my own experience, are more often than not very nice people, exemplary citizens in all other respects. And it may be that such a reservoir of decency will be a safeguard against the movement's going the full route implicit in Ehrlich's and Mrs. Willing's views. But the decency of the individual members will be of importance only so long as it can still be mobilized in the context of a free society. And it is just that, a free society, which seems to be most sharply under attack in the writings of the leaders.

Ehrlich, for example, would deny the right of dissent to those who disagree with him, arguing that magazines ought not to accept advertising

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which puts families of more than three in a favorable light; worse, perhaps, is his proposal to convert television into a propaganda machine by which large families will be allowed to appear only in an unfavorable light. Mrs. Willing would go even further, her understanding of law being that it is no more than whatever the majority is willing to adopt and coerce the minority into obeying. There is no danger, she thinks, that her program of compulsory sterilization and tattooings will evolve into National Socialist *Rassenkunde* because it will be a program democratically adopted by the majority. Can she imagine that the Nuremberg Laws were passed over the dead body of the German people?

The extreme callousness of the movement's chief advocates when it comes to the rights of others is nowhere more apparent than in their treatment of the religious issues involved in such questions as abortion and contraception. Ehrlich divides the religious world as it relates to population control thus: there are two sorts of Catholics (or insert the religion of your choice). Enlightened Catholics agree with Ehrlich. Unenlightened Catholics, like Dwight Eisenhower's "undiscerning Democrats," exist only by implication, and while they must be pretty numerous, their views, being unenlightened, are worth neither credence nor constitutional protection. In this analysis Ehrlich displays at its most flagrant a general inability to tolerate dissent, to comprehend the moral dilemmas of others, or even to recognize the existence of moral ambiguity. Ideologues like Ehrlich and Willing seem utterly unaware of the extent to which people will insist on obeying the inconvenient restraints laid upon them by their faith, trusting to the promise of God to see them through, and how often the faithful—including the educated, intelligent faithful—will trust to that promise. Whatever the cause of Ehrlich's extreme intolerance of the religious views of others, the sort of moral imperialism he expresses—and which we also find expressed in many other contexts—is itself surely the fastest growing religion in America today. Possibly there are those—surely there are—who will regard the effective destruction of freedom of religion as a reasonable price to pay for the population policy they want. But all who seek the policy should understand the price.

III

If the state of emergency declared by the population enthusiasts is largely spurious, and the measures they propose on the whole totally unacceptable in anything which pretends to be a free society, or even a moderately unfree one, it is still by no means clear that one can simply dismiss the problem about which they are exercised. For the essential premise of all population-control theory holds good: population cannot increase indefinitely in a finite universe. The development of a sane policy for confronting this fact is going to be a time-consuming and complicated process, and will require the attention of a great many experts. One of the things wrong with the present movement is the extent to which it is dominated by uncritical amateurs, and I for one do not intend to add to their number except in now trying to suggest, at the level of a concerned citizen, some tentative notions toward a policy conformable with a free society.

Assuming, then, that stabilizing the population would be a good thing, the choice is simple and clear between an entirely voluntary program of population control, having no guarantee of success, and an entirely compulsory one, in which the state uses Any Means Necessary to prevent more than N children in a family, up to and including the execution of all $N+1$ children who escape the contraception and abortion laws and get born. Anyone who represents the choice as any easier is foolish or dishonest, and probably both. For there are iron laws of guaranteed population control, and it would be a good thing if all recognized them just as soon as possible. They can be illustrated hypothetically thus:

The Republic of the Wasteland chooses zero population growth as a national policy. Its demographers determine that this policy precludes any families with more than two children. But it soon becomes clear to a regional commissioner of population that he is going to have a real problem with John and Mary Unenlightened. The Unenlighteneds still believe in an irrelevant and passé religious faith which tells them to be fruitful and multiply, which they interpret as an obligation to have as many children as they can. The first step the Republic took in the implementation of the new policy was the abolition of dependency allowances; it develops that this has not been enough to make the Unenlighteneds behave responsibly. They had two children when the policy was adopted, and now the Block Population Warden reports that Mary seems to be pregnant. After the application of considerable due process, including the retroactive issuing of a very expensive breeding license, the Unenlighteneds are found to be expecting their fourth child. What is the Republic to do with such people? It leans on them but they do not bend. It might fine them, but their willingness to buy breeding licenses suggests the futility of this. The state has a choice between letting the Unenlighteneds go on multiplying, and thus setting a very bad example for others, or finding a foolproof method of *preventing* rather than *disadvantaging* the birth of further children. Well, even someone whose heart is not really in it can suggest a number of efficient ways: the compulsory termination by

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abortion of any further pregnancies; compulsory sterilization of both Unenlighteneds (the sterilization of one or the other would suffice if one could only trust people like this to remain monogamous); the imprisonment, in segregated facilities, of both Unenlighteneds (with the same possibility of amelioration on the assumption of marital fidelity). The whole problem, to be sure, would have been obviated had the state adopted a policy of spiking the water supply with a contraceptive and issuing the appropriate antidote pills to those who insist on having up to two children.

Now, all of these measures are ferociously coercive, not least the "polite" form of the waterborne contraceptive, which transfers to the state the absolute power of decision as to whether anyone shall ever have a child.

But what about the pursuit by the government of a natalist policy aimed at discouraging people from having too many children rather than coercing them? It is hard to know how such a policy might be implemented beyond removing barriers to voluntary abortion and contraception (which is, of course, already being done). Senator Bob Packwood, of Oregon, who several years ago introduced a bill to limit dependency exemptions to two, has now let it die, inasmuch as families with incomes under $5,000 will soon be paying no tax with as few as two children, and since no one believes that people with incomes over $10,000 are encouraged by the exemptions to have more children.

We come back, then, to a voluntary program having no guarantee of success. But from the stipulation that a voluntary program has no guarantee of success, it does not follow that such a program would fail. For one thing, the current drop in the birth rate could turn out to be permanent. The Paddocks give a profile of Japan, showing why no undeveloped country is likely to duplicate Japan's feat of achieving population stability. This profile could be used as easily to demonstrate why the United States is likely to succeed at it. The primary difference is that we are not nearly as crowded as the Japanese, and even this may be discounted by the extent to which we are not nearly so good as the Japanese at adapting to great population density, and the extent to which the population people convince us that we are more crowded than we are.

Another possibility lies in what most of the advocates of compulsion regard as insufficient, namely a more perfect access to family planning. Larry Bumpass and Charles F. Westoff* have suggested that could the births now classified by the parents concerned as unwanted be eliminated by improved access to contraception, the resulting brake on growth would probably be as effective as any other now in sight. Such an outcome, it is clear, has of all possibilities the lowest component of coercion and his smooth-talking cousin, persuasion.

Although a portion of the argument for control rests on assumptions about the evils of population per se—assumptions about which I have already declared myself a skeptic—there is another portion based largely on the hope that population control will of itself do away with or largely ameliorate environmental stringencies. Ehrlich, it should be noted, believes that the environmental problem can be solved only by a combination of ZPG and neo-Puritan ethic. This is not the place for any detailed examination of the real nature of these stringencies, and I will just register my conviction that there is indeed an environmental problem of a magnitude sufficient to disturb any rational citizen. Whether or not the solution to that problem can be found in fewer people is quite a different question. Cases have been made, somewhat cursorily by Ben Wattenberg and in more detail by Peter Drucker,† that more people (within reason) will in fact *aid* in the solution of the environmental problem and that fewer, particularly as a result of precipitate reversal of the growth rate, will positively hinder it. For in identifying the major problem as one of too many people consuming too much, the population controllers tend to forget that these same people are also in the habit of paying taxes and contributing to corporate profits, wherefrom must be paid the costs of whatever needs to be done about the environment.

As it happens, I have two children, and for a variety of reasons plan to have no more; if I increase my family, it will be by adoption. Thus, presumably, a policy of enforced ZPG would in no way restrict my freedom. Indeed, as I buy a good part of the general argument for small families, I cannot even regard the substantive outcome of such a policy as entirely dubious. Nevertheless, I can imagine no multiplication of state power more noxious in itself and more destructive of freedom than granting the state the right to license existence.

Lest this seem an overwrought way of looking at the issue, consider the world envisioned by compulsory schemes of the sort Chasteen explicitly supports and to which Ehrlich's scheme inevitably leads. The granting to the state of the power to control the production of citizens is bound to alter the relation between it and them, no matter what theory of government one holds. Well, not quite no matter. There are, when you come down to it, only three theories of government. One theory holds that the state is the creation

*"Unwanted Births and U.S. Population Control," in *The American Population Debate.*

† Wattenberg, "The Nonsense Explosion," *New Republic*, April 4 and 11, 1970; Drucker, "Saving the Crusade," *Harper's*, January 1972.

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of God, deputized in the governance of His creatures. Those who take this view will note that God is displaced as the creator of the state's subjects and that the state replaces Him. (The wonder is not that some religions have been hostile to compulsory birth control, but rather that more have not been so.) Another theory holds that the state is the creation of man, deputized by him for his own governance. For those who take this second view (most people nowadays) the traditional relationship between man and the state becomes reversed. It is now man who exists at the sufferance of the state, not the other way around. Perhaps the generation which grants the state a veto over creation will think of itself as simply amending the social contract; but the next generation will begin each day in gratitude for the state which allows it to exist. As to the third theory of government, people don't normally talk about it in public. It is the one which O'Brien in *1984* described to Winston Smith in the basement of the Ministry of Love. And between that theory and the doctrine of compulsory population control there is no conflict at all.

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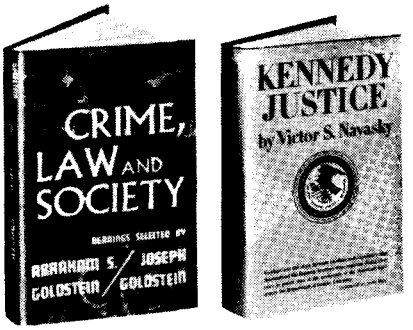

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Americans in Israel

Hillel Halkin

THERE are times when an American settler in Israel might think he was back in the 50's all over again.

Suddenly everyone is talking about a house in the suburbs. Television is still a novelty but so is the family that doesn't have one, and the tangled masts of antennas over Israel's cities make them look like beached fishing fleets that could well sail away in the night. If the movie houses are consequently emptier than they used to be, the new supermarkets are always full: the girls at the check-out counters have their names embroidered on their uniforms in Hebrew and live carp for *gefilte* fish cruise in the aerated pools. The first generation of frozen foods. Of superhighways. Of motels. Of high-rise apartments. In the elevator of a new office building in Tel Aviv the unsuspecting American is accosted by the familiar sound of Muzak. Even the pop songs on the radio, which have all but driven out the earnest if somewhat ersatz attempts of former years to create an indigenous Israeli folk music of a vaguely Oriental character, are dreamy and soft. One could practically fox-trot to them.

At social gatherings the guests sit around a table and talk. About the prices and virtues of things: Washing machines. Dishwashers. Automobiles. A trip to Europe. So-and-so is divorced. So-and-so is in therapy (ten years ago he wouldn't have gone). Perhaps a political discussion. Among liberals—and most educated Israelis today are liberals, if by that one means that they still believe in the power of things to get gradually better without getting gradually worse—there is a consensus of sorts: the present government may be ineffective but there is no realistic alternative in sight. Once it was Ben-Gurion who seemed to last forever, now it is Golda. Even an erstwhile young Turk like Dayan—and if there is one person in Israel who can bring even liberals to verbal blows, it is Dayan—is already pushing sixty and no nearer the prime ministry. The brutal cost-of-living. The latest financial scandals. The impossible taxes and how to get around them. (A friend tells the following story: his wife, a textile designer, had been working at a job for a take-home salary of 900 Israeli pounds, about 200 American dollars, a month. One day she was approached by a competing firm with an offer of 1500. When she told her boss about it, he explained that he could not possibly afford such a raise, because in her tax bracket it would mean a gross increase of over double the amount. Perhaps, though, he could have a day to think it over. The next morning he proposed a solution: he would raise her net take-home pay to 1100, and put her maid, whom she paid 400 pounds a month, on the company payroll.) The need for basic reforms. The unlikelihood of them before a détente with the Arabs. The unlikelihood of a détente with the Arabs.

An Israeli professor I talk to complains about his students: they are conformist, they don't think for themselves, they simply want to pass the exams. Others agree: the young are a silent generation. The son of recent American immigrants who is attending one of the best academic high schools in Israel tells me how frustrated he and his friends are in school. They are expected to learn everything by rote, they are given no room to express or pursue their own interests. They feel regimented and locked-in, but the pressures to do well, to get into the university and succeed in a career (and before that of course in the army), are enormous and they keep their feelings to themselves. I could have told him about growing up in the 50's.

If Israel has become in some ways more like the America that was, the attitude toward America itself has also changed. In the 50's, particularly at the start of the decade, the majority of Israeli intellectuals leaned to the Left. Pro-Russian feeling was still strong in some circles, but even where it had waned, or never really existed, there was little inclination to identify with the West. Had not the human facade of Western civilization itself been consumed in the ovens of Auschwitz? Besides which, the Jewish people had not regained its independence after two thousand years in order to create another little bourgeois state: Israel was to be something new, a unique undertaking that was neither East nor West, a radically successful experiment in democratic socialism. It had

HILLEL HALKIN, a young American writer and translator who lives in Israel, contributed "Building Jerusalem" to our September 1971 issue.

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worked in the kibbutz—why not in society at large? As for the United States, the American settler in Israel might not have been enamored of its politics himself, but he repeatedly found himself having to defend his native land against the unprovoked attacks of his Israeli acquaintances. Why had America begun the cold war? Why was a fascist like Joe McCarthy allowed to terrorize the whole United States? Why were the Negroes so brutally persecuted? Why was American culture so vulgar? Why did the State Department continue to support reactionary Arab rulers like Abdullah or Farouk, who were simply the front men for American and British oil interests?

This last question was asked with a particular sense of grievance, because if one thing was clear to the educated Israeli, it was that peace with the Arabs depended on a social revolution in the Arab countries themselves. The corrupt Arab feudal lords deliberately fanned hatred for Israel in order to create an outlet for popular discontent and because they feared the Jewish state's dynamic influence on their own enslaved masses; a truly progressive Arab regime, one dedicated to developing its own resources and freeing itself from imperialist domination, would find natural allies in the Israelis. Why didn't the Americans encourage such a process? What made them so short-sighted? And American Jews! Why were they so materialistic? Why didn't they come to join in the building of the new state? Even the money that they sent was at bottom tainted, an inadmissible form of ransom for their missing selves. What had happened to the Jewish sense of idealism, to say nothing of realism? Did they really think they would be safe among the fleshpots of Goshen forever? The trouble with the Jews was that they never learned. Take Germany, for example: hadn't the Jews been wealthy, powerful, secure there, too, hadn't they been patriots, more German than the Germans? The *goyim* in America were basically no different: scratch one and you found an anti-Semite like anywhere else. It was clear in fact that the Jewish idyll in America was already nearing its end: just look at the Rosenberg case.

THE American returning to Israel in the 70's soon finds that he has returned to a different conversation. It could well be with the same old friend, now twenty years older, yet he too has mellowed with the times: the intense young kibbutz intellectual is now a university professor who is graying at the temples and carries a slight paunch. Then he strode into a Tel Aviv café in khaki shorts—now he wears a tweed jacket and is smoking a pipe. Yes, he left the kibbutz a long time ago—toward the end of the 50's, in fact. By then the socialist ardor of his fellow kibbutzniks had cooled, along with their sense of embodying an alternate life-style which sooner or later the rest of Israel—perhaps one day of the world—would take as its model. Besides, he had wanted to study, to travel—life on the kibbutz had seemed so confining. He obtained his B.A. in Jerusalem and then was lucky enough to receive a graduate fellowship at a well-known American university. How different the United States had been from what he had imagined: a hospitable, broad-minded, civilized country, which made him, the Israeli, realize for the first time in his life how truly provincial he was. If he had come to America convinced that Americans were the most materialistic of people, he had reached the very opposite conclusion by the time his three years there were up: if anything, he now thought, they were the least, for more than anyone else on the face of the earth they were able to satisfy their material ambitions and worry about higher things. If only Israel had a little of America's "materialism," its knack for getting things done. Even American Jews had been a pleasant surprise. Sometimes of course you met one who lived up to the crass stereotype that was held by Israelis, but this was generally a member of the older generation, not American-born. The young Jews he got to know at the university were a delightfully sophisticated group. It was a sad admission to make, yet he could understand why life in Israel had little attraction for them. Only, what was happening to America now? It was pathetic to see a great nation wallowing in an orgy of guilt. Could it really be that the hippies, the violence, the permissiveness, the decadence, were symptoms of an incurable rot? The involvement in Vietnam was a tragic mistake, of course, but to fail to see it through to the end could only make things worse. The results would be fatal the world over, for only a strong American deterrent could thwart the Russian dream of global domination. Why couldn't the United States understand that Israel was fighting in the Middle East not only for itself but on behalf of the entire free world, on behalf of the West? Why were so many American-Jewish students and intellectuals taken in by the pro-Arab propaganda of the Left? One would never have thought to see such an outbreak of Jewish self-hatred in a country that had been so good to the Jews. No, one thing was certain: the Jews never learned. . . .

It is ironic of course that Israelis should have discovered the cold war just when Americans have grown justifiably sick of it, yet a good part of the difficulty in communication between Israelis and Americans, and particularly between Israelis and American Jews, has been that from the very beginning the intellectual and cultural climates of the two countries have been profoundly out of phase. If the 50's in America were predominantly a period of quiescence, in Israel they were one of fierce ideological debate between Left and Right, secularists and clericalists, Zionists and "Canaanites," cultural nationalists and cultural

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cosmopolitans. As in much of Europe, whose influence at the time was still greater than that of the United States, the early 50's represented less a break with the ideological battles of the 30's than a running continuation of them. In Israel, however, it was not only the politics of the new state that seemed essentially up for definition but its very social and cultural fabric, especially as the mass immigration of those years appeared to provide a unique opportunity to recast the lives of hundreds of thousands of uprooted people in new, freely devised molds. It was a time characterized by an enormous sense of the possible, and if the amount of social experimentation that actually took place in it fell short of the expectations of some, it was considerable by any standard. Yet as heated as was the competition of ideas in those years, so was the atmosphere of dogmatism in which it took place: friendships, political alliances, even an entire kibbutz movement, foundered and split apart over issues which in retrospect often seemed academic. To the American, accustomed to the more tolerant, pragmatic nature of intellectual life in the States, all this was oppressive. The Israelis, he might have thought, were in some ways admirably intense, but in their fanatical devotion to rectitude of principle as opposed to reasonableness of action they were frequently also absurd.

At the same time, the early 50's in Israel were years of considerable economic hardship. Many of the basic necessities were still under postwar rationing, while such luxuries of life as a "villa" —the word used by Israelis to this day to denote what would be considered a modest private house in any country in the West—a car, or even major electrical appliances, were put almost universally beyond reach by a combination of low wage-scales and exorbitant sales and import taxes. Because the spartan existence of these years was shared not only by the ordinary laborer and new immigrant but by the country's managerial and professional elite as well (not only did Jews not come with money to the Palestine of the British Mandate, they did not make it there either, for the more skilled or talented they were, the more their energies were devoted to the collective struggle of the Jewish *yishuv*; in any case, the opportunities for getting rich under the Mandate were limited at best, for industry was nonexistent and Jewish agriculture was almost entirely collectivized), the Israel of the early 50's was one of the most egalitarian societies in the world, one in which old wealth did not exist and new wealth had yet to be created. This economic equality went well with the ideological stresses of the times, but it took a heavy psychological toll in terms of constantly deferred expectations and a rising sense of frustration as the gap between the standard of living enjoyed by the average Israeli and that of his counterpart in the West steadily widened.

Thus, the sense of embourgeoisement that characterizes so much of Israeli life today must be viewed in part as a reaction against the ideological demands and the economic privations of the 50's, just as the 50's in America must be seen in the context of the Depression and the political and intellectual quarrels of the 30's. Having been fully active in Zionist youth movements as teenagers or in the underground in the last years of the British Mandate before serving in the Palmach or Haganah and then settling on the kibbutz, or going into government service, or beginning to study toward an undergraduate degree after the 1948 War of Independence, the generation of middle-class Israelis born in the 1920's or early 30's has just begun to establish itself economically and approach the level of consumption enjoyed by the middle-class family in the West, if only at the price of heavy borrowing and the incurring of lifelong debts. The children of this generation, born in the late 40's or 50's, have had the disenchanting experience of being educated in the old ideological molds at the precise moment when their real hold on national life was rapidly fading. Thus, the decline of ideology in Israeli life and the rise of middle-class values have been mutually abetting: if, on the one hand, Israel's transformation into a consumer society and its increasing economic stratification have made the ideological postures of the 50's seem already antique, the failure of all schools of Zionist thought to anticipate or account for such post-1948 realities as the prolongation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the absence of large-scale Jewish immigration from the West, or the social and economic conflicts that have developed within the Jewish state itself, has encouraged educated Israelis increasingly to rationalize a life built around the pursuit of getting and spending. The plain fact of the matter is that even the most patriotic Israeli is tired of being told what he can do for his country. He has done, he feels, a great deal as it is and is continuing to do more every year in the form of a month-or-longer's annual service in the reserves, a six-day work week, and payment of the world's highest taxes not only on his income but on practically everything he buys or sells. In return he is asking little more than the right to enjoy without guilt the modest hedonistic pleasures that life in the 70's at long last is beginning to bring his way.

IT MIGHT be imagined that the dramatic events of recent years—the Six-Day War and the increasing flow of immigration from the West and particularly from the Soviet Union —would have worked to reverse this trend of "de-Zionization," and in a sense they have; yet they have also had the opposite effect of feeding the growing materialism of Israeli life, and it is this seeming paradox that generates the peculiar strain under which Israeli society as a whole has lately been laboring. The war itself, certainly, cre-

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ated not only a powerful feeling of internal unity —a feeling, needless to say, that has slowly been wearing off, like any intoxicant—but more importantly in the long run, a renewed sense of identification with the past, beginning with 1948 and the Holocaust years, and progressively on back through the course of Jewish history to the biblical resonances of such places on the conquered West Bank as Bethlehem, Hebron, Shechem, Jericho, and, of course, Jerusalem. Indeed, the war clearly touched a subterranean well of sentiment whose true emotional and even mythic reserves cannot yet be estimated. More prosaically, however, it did something else, which was to bring Israel out of its severe 1966-67 recession and launch it on a postwar boom that so far shows little sign of slackening, much as World War II brought an end to the Depression and fueled the U.S. economic expansion of the 40's and 50's.

For Israel this nexus of war and profit has been something new. If no one in the country grew privately rich from the military outcome of the 1948 War of Independence or the 1956 Sinai Campaign, the same cannot be said of 1967. The significant economic fact about 1967 is not merely that it led to a near tripling of Israel's pre-war defense budget, but that in addition—in good measure due to the lesson of de Gaulle's embargo—a far greater share of the annual defense expenditure is now being invested in domestic production rather than in foreign procurement. Besides exerting a strong inflationary pressure on an already overheated economy, this situation has led for the first time to the creation of what might be accurately called an Israeli military-industrial complex and has helped bring into existence an entire new class of *nouveaux riches,* military contractors and subcontractors who have been flooded with hundreds of millions of pounds worth of orders for anything from the building of front-line fortifications on the Suez to research-and-development projects for the manufacture of sophisticated electronic equipment. A conspicuous new subculture of expense-accounts and high living has mushroomed, and in at least one case, that of the Sinai oil fields, has resulted in a major financial scandal directly attributable to the post-1967 military occupation. It is certainly not the least of the moral dilemmas posed by the war and its aftermath that what was and essentially continues to be a struggle for national survival has become at the same time a source of considerable aggrandizement for some Israelis and a spur to the acquisitive instincts of nearly all.

The story of immigration has been equally problematic. Israel is a country which has always lived off immigration psychologically as well as economically, and if the slowdown of the middle 60's was in large measure caused by the effects of a sharp decline in immigration once the flow from Eastern Europe and the Arab countries had dried up, the overall malaise of those years was equally a product of the feeling that without new immigrants the Zionist rationale of the state had ceased to exist. It goes without saying therefore that the jump in immigration following the Six-Day War has, like the war itself, helped restore a sense of national purpose to Israeli life—yet it too has had its complications. Unlike the immigrants of the late 40's or 50's, many of those arriving today come with considerable means, in addition to which they receive a wide range of economic benefits from the government in the form of a series of subsidies, tax and customs rebates, and low-interest bank mortgages that are made available to them during their first three years in the country. These benefits, which were introduced shortly after the 1967 war in the hope of further encouraging the wave of potential new immigrants that the war produced, have clearly played a role in the current upsurge of immigration, though exactly how much of one is difficult to determine; they have also, however, succeeded in creating a highly ambivalent attitude toward the immigration among many Israelis, particularly among the poorer population, hundreds of thousands of whom remember how they arrived in the country not long ago themselves with little or nothing but got nowhere near the amount of financial aid that today's more affluent immigrants receive. It is one thing after all to tell the Israeli taxpayer that he must tighten his belt to help accommodate the roughly 70,000 new immigrants who are expected to arrive in 1972; it is another to explain to him that many of them will not come at all unless they can be assured of the kind of middle-class existence to which they may have been accustomed in their native lands but which to the average Israeli is still an unsatisfied aspiration. His resentment is less likely to be directed against the Russian Jews, who come with less and have had to struggle for the right to come at all, than against immigrants from Western Europe and especially America, who arrive with their cars, their appliances, their crates full of furniture, and their dollars with which to buy homes that 90 per cent of Israelis cannot possibly afford and which would not cost as much if these very same dollars had not helped contribute to a wild inflation of real-estate prices. It is an existence which Israelis envy and which many of them feel they should not be asked to support as long as they cannot emulate it themselves. If no American can be expected to want to live in Israel without such creature comforts, they not illogically reason, why should they?

Why indeed?

II

PITY the poor American immigrant! He certainly does not expect to be envied; at first, in fact, it seems incredible to him that he should be. He has gotten an interest-free

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loan of one or two thousand dollars to help transport his possessions to Israel? But if he is coming with a family of four, moving alone may cost him several times that amount. He is allowed to bring a new car into Israel tax-free, a car on which the Israeli citizen would have to pay a customs duty of approximately 200 per cent? But in America he was used to two cars; this one will have to last him the rest of his life if he does not want to pay customs on another; and its annual upkeep alone may cost him 20 per cent of his Israeli salary. The 40- to 50,000-pound mortgage that is automatically his as an immigrant is available to no Israeli on equally good terms? But it is not his fault that Israel has practically no rental system to speak of and that the house or apartment that will satisfy his minimal requirements will cost him 100,000 pounds or more to buy, whereas in America he could have gotten a bank mortgage for nearly the entire sum. And so it goes: the loans, the subsidies, the rebates, the incentives—at best they serve to defray part of his expenses and to cushion him slightly against the almost inevitable drop in his standard of living that moving to Israel entails. Even at that he has hardly alighted from the plane before he finds himself staring with alarm at the prices in the shop windows, which may have seemed reasonable enough when he was last in Israel as a tourist with dollars, but which are clearly outrageous when judged by the salary he is now getting in pounds. A long list of little items (the big ones go without saying) that he wouldn't have thought twice about buying on a whim in America has suddenly become out of bounds. In real terms, he calculates, the purchasing power of his income has at least been halved. Saving is out of the question; from now on he considers himself lucky if he can pay all his bills at the end of the month. If it weren't so painful, the thought that he was an object of envy—*he*, whose decision to settle in Israel has involved so much sacrifice—would seem like a Jewish joke.

Still, he has come—and in growing numbers. From about 2,000 in 1968 the number of American immigrants to Israel has risen to about 6,000 in 1969, 7,000 in 1970, and 9,000 in 1971, with another 10,000 projected for 1972. These figures may still represent a minuscule percentage of the American-Jewish community as a whole and may even be proportionally small when compared to immigration from other countries in the West,* but to appreciate them fully it need only be pointed out that they total far more than the number of American Jews who emigrated to Israel in the entire period between 1948 and 1967 and that no more than an estimated third of the latter were still in the country on the eve of the Six-Day War.

Even more dramatic in Israeli terms has been the rise in the American share of total annual immigration to Israel: from barely 1 per cent in the period 1948-67 to nearly 20 per cent in 1971. (This percentage will again dip of course if the current increase in immigration from Russia continues.) Clearly something has happened since the Six-Day War, though clearly, too, it would be erroneous to attribute it to the effect of the war alone. The war's impact on American-Jewish consciousness was great, of course, but if the sudden illumination of a commonly sensed danger and solidarity had in itself been enough to make a significant number of American Jews seriously consider Israel as an alternative home, many apparently for the first time in their lives, what was it that kept such a reaction from occurring long ago—in 1948, for example, when by any objective standard the threat to the continuity of Jewish existence was far greater? Then, after all, the crematoria in Europe had barely stopped smoking; the danger of physical extermination faced by the Jews of Palestine was far greater; the prospect of any effective international intervention to prevent such a second Holocaust was far less; yet so was the number of American Jews who were moved by these considerations to any practical Zionist conclusions of their own. It is true of course that whereas in 1948 Israel was still a distant abstraction to most American Jews, it had become by 1967 a familiar reality, one whose threatened existence, many discovered in the course of a few short weeks, meant more to them than they had ever previously imagined. It would seem equally true, however, that for at least some American Jews, a correspondingly great change has taken place in their attitude toward America.

IT WOULD be surprising indeed if it hadn't, considering the stunning psychological reversal in their sense of themselves that Americans as a whole have suffered. It would be going too far perhaps to suggest that the Jews have had a falling-out with America or America with the Jews—if the intellectual and literary philo-Semitism of the 50's is today largely a thing of the past, it is not the first time that the Jews have been in or out of fashion in the world of American letters—but undeniably a growing number of American Jews have begun to wonder whether as a community they will ever again have it so good in the United States as they did during the two decades following the Second World War. Certainly that extraordinary psychological balance struck in the soul of the American Jew for the better part of this century between the sense of being American and the sense of being a Jew—the conviction indeed that only a rare destiny could have superimposed two terms

* Thus, whereas less than one-sixth of 1 per cent of the Jewish population of the United States emigrated to Israel in 1971, the corresponding figure for the Jewish populations of France and Great Britain was in the neighborhood of one-half of 1 per cent.

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so historically and culturally compatible—has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Though one can hardly label Zionist a vague unease that may initially have little to do with Israel, it has clearly proven a fertile ground for many of the feelings about Israel aroused by the Six-Day War. These feelings themselves of course are by no means universal; but the very fact that many American Jews do not share them only seems likely in the long run to strengthen the cohesiveness of those who do. If, indeed, as seems possible, the American-Jewish community is currently undergoing a process of polarization whereby one part of it is edging off the map of Jewish consciousness entirely while another is increasingly crystallizing around the issue of identification with Israel, the current rise in American-Jewish immigration to Israel may well be the start of a long-term trend.

Whether it is or not, however, a salient difference between the American settler in Israel today and his predecessor in the 50's would seem to be that whereas the former is also immigrating *to* Israel, he is more commonly conscious of emigrating *from* conditions in the United States as well. His motives for emigration may vary widely and more often than not are likely to combine specifically Jewish preoccupations with a sense of that general deterioration in American life that has become a conversational staple throughout the United States. Among elderly people this may most frequently have to do with crime in the streets, or inflation, which makes it impossible to live on a pension or social-security check that can stretch much further in Israel, or the collapse of Jewish communal life in the old neighborhood; among younger couples, with job insecurity, or concern about the environment, or anxiety about the Jewish education of their children or about American youth culture generally; among students, with the anti-Israeli and at times openly anti-Semitic rhetoric of the New Left, or the rise of black separatism, which may have done more than anything else in America today to relegitimize a sense of Jewish nationalism in the eyes of the young.

In all of these cases, the American in Israel today enjoys a certain advantage in his ability to adjust over the American in the 50's. In the first place, whatever his dissatisfactions with Israeli life—and these are likely, particularly at the outset, to be considerable—the temptation to return to his former existence in the States may simply not be that great. Secondly, because Americans themselves seem to have lost their sense of being history's chosen people—because they increasingly seem to have lost the sense of being a single people at all—it has become subtly easier for the American Jew to shed that stubborn skin of American identity that so often hindered his integration into Israeli life in the past. Not that he is assured of finding his niche in Israel or that he may not re-emigrate in the end,* but the almost neurotic ambivalence that characterized the world of so many Americans in Israel in the 50's, that chronic anomie which made the same individual who had previously decided that he felt too intensely Jewish ever to be happy in America now decide that he felt too intensely American ever to be happy in Israel, would seem far less prevalent today. In this respect, at least, the immigrant from America has become more like the immigrant from elsewhere.

ADJUSTMENT has become easier in other ways too. A series of recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings has made it possible for Americans in Israel to become *de facto* dual nationals like most other immigrants from the West and thus circumvent the painful dilemma of former years of having either to renounce their U.S. citizenship or refrain from becoming full Israelis.† The very fact that there are many more Americans in Israel now helps to provide a broader social framework into which the new immigrant can fit and to shield him from an initial sense of isolation, while at the same time dispelling the oppressive feeling—so common among American settlers in Israel in the 50's—of belonging to a small expatriate colony, each member of which knew every other. (True, one frequently hears Americans complain today too that while they do not lack for friends, few if any of these are "real" Israelis, yet sociologically speaking, new immigrants anywhere have always tended to group by country of origin. Certainly there is no evidence to indicate that Americans have more difficulty in getting to know Israelis than other immigrants, and they at least have the advantage of speaking a language that nearly all educated Israelis understand.) Indeed, if an immigrant community must attain a certain critical mass before it can function as an effective vehicle of integration for those who come after,

* Official Israeli statistics on re-emigration by country of origin do not exist, but whereas the proportion of American-Jewish immigrants who returned to the United States in the period preceding the Six-Day War is generally put in the vicinity of two-thirds, an educated guess might be that about the same figure is currently choosing to remain.

† Although Israeli law provides that any Jew entering the country as an immigrant is automatically entitled to Israeli citizenship, many immigrants today and nearly all Americans come on a three-year "trial period," during which their official status is that of "temporary resident—potential immigrant." If they choose to remain at the end of this period they become full "immigrants" with the rights and obligations of Israeli citizens. The obligations include, for men, service in the army, which generally means a brief basic training followed by an annual call-up to the reserves. The fact that Americans now can and do serve in the army—the single institution in Israel that serves as a common mortar among Israelis from all walks of life—without fear of losing their U.S. citizenship has removed a pyschological burden that often weighed on them greatly in the past.

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the American presence in Israel has probably only recently reached that point.

The increased affluence of Israeli life has also proved an alleviating factor. It is not just that the American can now live in Israel in something closer to the style to which he is accustomed, albeit with a good deal of uncustomary scrimping, but that this style itself is no longer considered outlandish by his Israeli peers: it has in fact become very much their idea of the good life too. Even to feel occasionally envied, after all, is better than to feel disdained. The very word *amerikai* has lost its supercilious bite, and, if anything, the bearer of the title in Israel today is likely to feel uncomfortably embarrassed by the admiration he encounters for so much of the worst of American popular culture, by the automatic assumption that an American product is best, by the story he hears from a friend, an American immigrant himself, of how when the latter bought a house on a suburban street previously inhabited only by Israelis the value of every other dwelling on the block jumped by 25 per cent overnight. *Amerikai* indeed!

Granted, other aspects of Israeli life that plagued the American immigrant in the past have changed less. The amount of bureaucratic red-tape to which he is subjected, and which to a somewhat lesser extent is the permanent lot of every Israeli, can still reduce a brave man to tears; the overall quality of services and manners is as offhand as ever; the general level of efficiency, or lack of it, cannot be said to have noticeably improved. Here too, however, not all is as bad as it once was, and in any case, such annoyances are ruled by certain laws of relativity of whose existence the contemporary American is well aware. If twenty years ago, for example, he had to wait five years for a new telephone to be installed in Jerusalem and a week in New York, today his chances may be even in either place, except that in Israel he will remark how much better things have gotten. Granted, his new life seems extortionately expensive—yet it has its inestimable fringe benefits too, such as being able to walk the streets without fear after dark, or to breathe air in the cities that still smells like air, or to send his children to the nearest public school. Granted, hardly a day goes by without some new war scare in the papers—but eventually he learns to ignore it like his Israeli neighbors, and if things should flare up in the end, there is at least the compensation of that powerful current of solidarity that runs among Israelis at such times. It is then most of all, indeed, that the American immigrant is impressed by what it is like to live in a society where the forces that divide people from one another are still weaker than those that unite them, where commonly-shared norms, hopes, and fears still prevail, in which—however one cares to define it—there is a center that still holds. At such times America seems distant indeed.

And yet there are other times too. . . . No, it is not just that in being reminded of the 50's the American is made to remember that if they were comfortable years to live in, they were also politically innocent, morally self-assured, aesthetically shallow, intellectually dull. It is not even just the retrospective awareness that their essential optimism rested on a cobweb of illusion regarding the power of modern social and technological engineering to solve a broad complex of problems without creating even worse ones in their place. It is in addition, quite simply, the knowledge that the era of the 50's was short-lived. In fact, those years seem most remarkable already by the abruptness of their passing. Where was the American ten years ago who would have believed that life in his country could have soured as quickly as it did? Where is the American today who is not stricken with a positive sense of vertigo when he thinks back on the last decade?

It is this that makes the American immigrant in Israel today a natural worrier, for if among men he has uniquely seen the affluent future and known that it does not quite work, he is also apprehensively aware of with what dizzying speed a seemingly stable society can begin to malfunction once its stress points are badly overloaded. It is with a certain hypochondriacal anxiety, therefore, that he scans his new horizons for signs of the familiar disease. Has there recently been a rash of purse-snatchings in the streets of Tel Aviv, of burglaries in the apartments of Jerusalem? Are there days when a purple curtain of industrial smog is visible from afar over Haifa? Did he recently read in the newspapers that the serenely blue Sea of Galilee has reached a critical point of pollution? Do the traffic jams in Israel's cities seem to worsen by the day while more and more families flee to the suburbs in their newly purchased cars? Does 40 per cent of the country's population still live in substandard housing and half of this figure below what is officially considered the poverty line in Israel today? Has the rapid growth of Israel's universities been accompanied by a steady decline in the quality of its elementary and secondary education? Have ethnic and religious tensions between Jews that were only recently considered to be disappearing begun to surface once again? Is the Israeli economy becoming increasingly dependent on unskilled and semi-skilled Arab labor from the occupied West Bank? To most Israelis such facts represent unrelated problems, each to be dealt with in itself. To the American, on the other hand, who views them with a growing sense of *déjà vu*, they are likely to seem part of a syndrome he knows only too well. Not that he wishes to be an alarmist;

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yet it is difficult to deny that if today, nearly five years after the triumphant Six-Day War, Israel is a wealthier and more powerful country than it has ever been before, it is also one that is beginning to show signs of increasing social strain. Certainly the country is laboring to do too many things at once: continually to expand the deterrent capacity of its military machine against the Arabs, to administer and partially settle the territories conquered in the Six-Day War, to encourage and absorb a growing wave of immigration, to sustain one of the world's highest economic growth rates while simultaneously curbing inflation and reducing a staggering annual trade deficit, to widen an already extensive network of welfare services and improve living conditions among the urban and rural poor—and to do all this without raising the already barely supportable tax burden of the middle class or impinging on its newly achieved comforts. To achieve all of these aims is economically impossible; to abandon any of them, politically so; and the result has been a rising sense of discontent at practically all levels of Israeli society. At the same time, the gradual hardening of the arteries of Israel's highly centralized political system, which at its most vigorous never provided a very adequate means of communication between Israelis and their government or even the political opposition, has prevented the public from venting its grievances in any constructive political form. It would be an exaggeration to say that Israel today is a demoralized country, but there is certainly a growing feeling that something is not going right. Are the Israeli 60's, the American immigrant wonders, already under way?

Of course he knows better than to press the analogy: Israel, when all is said and done, is not America; Israelis (quite literally, as many an American-Jewish tourist has discovered to his surprise) are not a nation of whites; Arabs (or is it Sephardic Jews?) are not blacks; the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the war in Vietnam. How typically American to insist on being an object lesson in failure if one cannot be one in success! In talking with Israelis, indeed, the American immigrant is made to realize how, imperceptibly perhaps, he has been "radicalized" after all by the past decade of American life, if not in his politics then at least in his perceptions: whereas not long ago he was like most Americans a fundamental optimist about the power of reason and good will to cut through the most intractable social and national conflicts if only given a democratic chance, he harbors today a morbid awareness of the capacity of men in the most relatively democratic of societies to act in self-destructive disregard of their own (to say nothing of others') interests. How naive the liberal faith of his Israeli friends seems to him—and how refreshing. Who is to say, after all, that they do not know their own country better than he does? Why judge them in his jaded American terms? And yet—if ultimately the comparison *does* seem significant, it is perhaps less because of the specific problems with which Israel is faced than because of a certain quality of the spirit that he judges common to both countries, a restlessness, a driven energy, an appealing confidence in action that can easily turn to frustration when thwarted. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that both are immigrant nations, born from a myth, a utopian construct of history no less than from history itself, and that both are condemned therefore to a perpetual quarrel with history and to a dangerously low threshold of disillusion; perhaps too with the natively classless ethos of both, which chafes against social inequities that might well be deemed tolerable elsewhere. (An American-Jewish tourist recently told me with a mixture of amusement and pique how she had been answered by an Israeli hotel clerk in reply to a simple question on her part, "Madam, if I were a prophet, I wouldn't be here." But, of course, all Jews are prophets, just as all Americans are created equal.) It is above all this running tension between the real and the ideal that creates a potentially explosive situation in Israel between Jew and Jew.

YET it is the conflict between Jew and Arab which continues to incubate most tragically today more than ever, and here too the American has not been shaped by his experience to take a sanguine view. Along with 2.7 million other Jews he now finds himself living in a country which has a population of 1.4 million Arabs within its present borders, as opposed to 2.4 million Jews and .3 million Arabs before the Six-Day War. Even in the unlikely eventuality that nearly all the million Arabs now living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should be returned tomorrow to some form of Arab rule, Israel would remain with a Jewish-Arab ratio of no more than 5 to 1—half that, the American uneasily notes, of whites to blacks in the United States. What will happen, however (and it may be that the die has already been cast, less as a result of any deliberate decision on anyone's part than of an inexorable drift of events which possibly no Israeli government could have reversed even had it sought to), if all the currently occupied portion of Palestine should remain permanently under Israeli control? How can a Palestinian Arab population half as large as the Jewish possibly be accommodated within Israel's political life without tearing the country apart? Yet the implications of not accommodating it are in the long run more ominous still. Though he would be the last to deny the remarkable success of Israel's military government in suppressing guerrilla resistance in the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank,

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while at the same time minimizing the indignities of an unwelcome occupation and creating an unprecedented economic boom among the population into the bargain, the complacent assumption of even sophisticated Israelis that if the Arabs will not go away they will at least behave themselves indefinitely if treated with a firm but benevolent hand cannot help but remind the American of similarly patronizing attitudes that were once prevalent in his native land. No, Israelis are not whites nor Arabs blacks, but if the recent history of America has taught him anything, it is the treachery of the ground that lies between a majority that is unconscious of being oppressive and a minority that is conscious of being oppressed. Whatever the future of Arab-Jewish relations in whatever part of Palestine the two peoples are henceforward fated to share, the American immigrant is less likely than the average Israeli to imagine they can be smooth.

It has been argued by some—most notably by the proponents of outright Israeli annexation of the territories—that Jewish immigration to Israel in the years to come will sufficiently offset the size of the Arab population now under Israeli rule to allow the latter to be peacefully absorbed into Israeli life without seriously endangering the Jewish character of the state. This argument is as disingenuous statistically as it is politically, but the fact remains that regardless of the solutions that are or are not reached between Palestinian Jews and Arabs in the years to come, the two peoples are embarked on a demographic race whose proportions are staggering. To an American who has witnessed in recent years his own country's painful weaning from an almost religious commitment to the virtues of unlimited growth, and who has lived to see the curve of human frustrations produced by the latter shoot up at a far faster rate than the curve of human satisfactions, it comes as something of a shock to hear Israeli leaders speak calmly of doubling the country's population between now and the end of the century—and yet a rudimentary glance at the statistics is enough to convince him that this is if anything a conservative estimate.* Whatever the social and political implications of five to six million Jews living side by side with one to three million Arabs in the year 2000 may be, the economic and environmental ones seem frightening. Where will all these people be put? What kind of economic infrastructure will be necessary to support them at some kind of reasonable level and at what price to an urban and rural environment that is already showing distressing signs of blight? What does this mean in terms of the quality of life that Jews and Arabs together can look forward to in ten, twenty, or thirty years? The answers of course do not exist, least of all, it would seem, in the minds of Israeli planners, but the questions, to say the least, are disturbing.

If our American finds them so, he finds it disturbing too that most Israelis seem as yet undisturbed, though it is easy enough to understand how the sheer struggle for survival has driven more long-term calculations from their minds. Not that the conflict with the Arabs has resulted in any appreciable suppression of political or intellectual dissent, but rather that like the cold war in the 50's in the United States, only far more so, it has led to an overconcentration of national energies and to a hesitancy to speak out on issues that could prove nationally divisive. It has of course become commonplace to remark that once there is peace with the Arabs Israel will explode from within, and it is certainly true that the military situation has too often been used as a carpet under which a growing number of critical problems have been carelessly swept. True, the danger of peace is remote . . . except that the carpet has reached the bulging point in any case. Overextended as the country already is, it will somehow have to cope with all the practical problems of peace in a state of at least semi-war for an indefinite time to come.

OUR American immigrant need not be clairvoyant therefore—though he would not be an American if he did not sometimes feel that he was—to realize that in settling in Israel he has hardly gotten away from it all. In fact, if there is one luxury in Israel that even affluence cannot buy, it is being able to get away from any of it for very long: the country is simply too small, the problems too great, the demands on the individual too relentless, the possibilities for anonymity too rare. (An Israeli joke, which I am assured is of vintage age, though I heard it for the first time on the morning of writing these lines: An Egyptian spy comes to Israel on a

* One can project Israeli population figures for the year 2000 on the basis of a number of assumptions. If one assumes, for instance, that Israel will eventually return the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Arab rule, the territory remaining—pre-1967 Israel plus the former Jordanian sector of Jerusalem—has a present population of close to 2.7 million Jews and .4 million Arabs. If the Arab population continues to increase at its current rate of nearly 4 per cent a year, which is among the highest in the world, it will reach 1 million by the year 2000, while should the Jewish population continue to grow at its current rate of about 100,000 a year—slightly more than half of which is due to immigration and slightly less than half to natural increase—it will top 5 million by the same year. Barring relatively unpredictable factors, however, two other possibilities need to be taken into account. One is that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will remain part of Israel, whose total Arab population by the year 2000 will then approach 3 million. The other is that a mass exodus to Israel of Jews from the Soviet Union and/or other countries (Argentina, South Africa, etc.) of high Jewish concentrations and of sociopolitical stability may swell the immigrant population by even more. It is possible, in other words, that by the end of the century there will be some 9 million people living in the former Mandatory territory of Palestine under Israeli rule—an increase of about 225 per cent from the present and of nearly 500 per cent from 1948!

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secret mission with instructions to contact Goldberg. Upon reaching the address he has been given, however, he is dismayed to discover that there are in fact two Goldbergs listed on the directory downstairs. What is he to do now? Throwing caution to the winds, he knocks on the door of the first Goldberg and whispers the codeword. The Jew in the doorway looks puzzled, but only for a moment. "Ah," he says, brightening, "you must be looking for Goldberg the spy! He lives up above, on the third floor.") In America our American has always been conscious of, has perhaps even exercised, the option of indifference, latterly known as dropping out, whether into the vastness of American space, the neighborless tower on the thirty-second floor, or those twenty acres in Vermont, or simply into the inviolability of his own detachment, be it that of the ironically philosophical eye or of the more supine spectator sport practiced nightly by millions of his fellow countrymen who have learned to watch Watts and Vietnam go up in flames on the screens of their television sets with all the insouciance of a Nero.

In Israel, however, he soon discovers—if he did not, that is, know it before coming, if it was not, in fact, his reason *for* coming—that no matter how tall the building he lives in there will always be another neighbor named Goldberg, and that the faces on the television, now that it unfortunately exists . . . well, they too belong to Jews. So indeed does everyone's. Unless of course he is Arab, which is to say, a victim of Jews perhaps, or an enemy of Jews, but still, like the elephant, like everything else in this country of many sorrows and few amenities, an essentially Jewish problem.

In the end one can like that fact or leave it, feel limited or liberated by it, and for every case of an American who has come to Israel expecting to feel the one way only to wind up feeling the other, it is possible to cite a case in reverse. What it ultimately boils down to is a matter of chemical reaction, and though we know enough to class them with the volatile substances, we still do not know very much about the chemistry of the Jews. Are some born with a valence for like and some with a valence for unlike, are some suddenly ionized in mid-course so that they change from one to the other? We do not know, nor, when the sociologists have finished scoring the last questionnaire and tabulating the last punch card, are we likely to know much more. In the final analysis, if Israel has any message for all of us, it may be nothing more than that although we are living in a world where we are more and more becoming less and less free to choose our own problems—where more and more of the problems, in fact, are depressingly the same all over—we can still have some say in deciding whom to share those problems with. For the American Jew in Israel who, sometimes without knowing it yet himself, is there to stay, there eventually comes a time when in talking to an Israeli, in English or in Hebrew, a day or month or year after his arrival, he first uses the pronoun "we." It is not a dramatic occasion, but if he bothered to notice it at all he will probably tell you that the feeling was basically good. Be it ever so complicated, there is still, for some of us at least, no place like home.

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What to Do About Television

Martin Mayer

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty
With slow rotation suggesting permanence
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with deprivation
Cleansing affection from the temporal.
Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
Over the strained time-ridden faces
Distracted from distraction by distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration. . . .
—T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

TELEVISION will not go away; it is embedded in the culture now, like frozen lasagna, golf carts, and sociology departments. Those who would deny that it has been a boon to individuals in their private lives can be brushed aside; there is simply no question that television has answered the most desperate of human needs, the need for escape from boredom, escape from self. For those multitudes who cannot escape through their work or their reading or the experience of art, television has been about as close as they could hope to come to a heaven on earth.

But men do not live as individuals: they are sustained by each other in a society. Television has been so pervasive a presence in American society that one cannot imagine what American life would be like without it. Still, some influences can be claimed for it on no better authority than obviousness and observation:

• People go out less at night. The diminishing need for places to congregate has been a contributing factor in the flight to the suburbs and the decay of the city. The fact that the home has become the prime locus of entertainment has changed the nature of home and family in ways nobody has yet been bright enough to explore. Among the real differences between today's young and the young of previous generations is the fact that as children today's young shared more of their parents' entertainment—and less of every other aspect of their parents' lives—than the young of any previous generation in any social class except the very rich.

• People have acquired a new kind of relationship with large numbers of total strangers who come into their homes on a picture tube. Every television entertainer (this includes newsmen) has had the experience of being greeted on the street by people he does not know at all, who then suddenly withdraw on the realization that this person who was indeed in their home cannot know he has been there. In America the fact that many of these visitors have been black is a social event of prime importance but sometimes ambiguous meaning. Several surveys have strongly indicated that blacks themselves believe television to be the American institution that cares most about what happens to them and is most on their side: certainly blacks have been more prominent on television—in sports, entertainment, and public-affairs programs—than anywhere else in society. But the effects of the entertainment programs have probably been far more positive than the effects of the most well-meaning (*especially* the most well-meaning) public-affairs shows. The inescapable bias of news *qua* news has too often impaled black Americans as a class in the butterfly case of trouble, *interesting* trouble, on the short-time horizon. The experience of color on color television has been most important, and sometimes most disturbing, for blacks themselves. "If you live in a black community," Albert Murray wrote recently, commenting on what he called the Minority Psyche Fallacy, "the world looks black." True once; but no longer.

Politically, the common statement that the constant presence of an electronic specter has made "image" substitute for reality is as simpleminded as the earlier insistence that television somehow revealed "the truth" about people. No political figure today has the "image" that a Warren G. Harding or Andrew Jackson or Caesar Augustus commanded in times prior to television. But the feeling of familiarity is new.

• The work of establishing a unified culture in

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a country the size of a continent has been accomplished (apparently in the Soviet Union as well as in the United States), completing a job the national magazines began three generations ago (and thereby making the mass magazine obsolete in terms of social function). This final Americanization of the community has greatly weakened in fact the particular institutions of a heterogeneous society (the Sokol, the Knights of Columbus, the trade-union meeting hall, the DAR, the neighborhood political club, the KKK). As a prime mover in the downgrading of local phenomena and the elevation of national phenomena in the consciousness of ordinary people, television has contributed to the feeling of "powerlessness" that does afflict fair numbers of Americans.

• The speed and ease of introduction of novelty has biased both consumption and production toward new—or arguably new—products; the nature of television advertising has biased industrial research toward the creation of products that yield a demonstrable, surface improvement. But the idea that television advertising is itself a major cultural influence (apart from the pressure for maximum audience that advertising creates) cannot be seriously supported in the 1970's. All the stigmata of Americanization, from snack bars on superhighways to dishwashers to supermarkets to snotty kids, have come rapidly to Europe despite the much slighter presence of television advertising there. The triumphant ad campaigns of the 1950's, which built new markets for detergents and headache remedies and life insurance and hair sprays and air travel and other estimable economic goods, were not to be found in the latter 1960's; advertising on television like advertising in print had become part of the wallpaper for most people most of the time, proving, probably, that one can become conditioned to anything.

No doubt television advertising continues to sell merchandise, probably at unit costs lower than those attributable to other general-audience media, and its pervasiveness makes it an indispensable tool for forcing new products onto already crowded shelves in the stores. Moreover, because the arrival of quality inexpensive videotape equipment enabled local stations to make professional-looking advertising for local retailers at about the same time that the 1970 recession pushed down the price of advertising minutes, food chains and department stores have begun to do price-oriented broadcast advertising, taking the money out of their newspaper budgets. This advertising has been effective in drawing customers into the stores, and as a class it grew rapidly even in the recession years 1970 and 1971. During this decade, local television will probably cripple the big metropolitan newspapers as network television in the 1950's and 1960's crippled *Collier's*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Look*. Painfully little attention has been paid to this erosion of support for the newspapers, which are in fact the only possible medium for the expression of diversity to the entire community. Typically, as in the recent case involving Boston's WHDH-TV, the Federal Communications Commission picked precisely the wrong moment to move against newspaper ownership of television facilities: for the 1970's, it would have been much wiser public policy to encourage the ownership of local stations by local papers.

While it remains true that a man who advertised a cancer cure on television could sell a lot of snake oil (which means that some regulation is always going to be necessary), ordinary advertising for ordinary products ought not to be taken as seriously as most academic critics seem to take it. At present, it seems more significant in shifting market shares from one brand to another than in encouraging increases in total consumption of any product. In 1971 cigarette advertising was ruled off the air completely—and sales of cigarettes in the United States *increased*. Continuing to argue that the tube makes people buy what they would otherwise shun, as J. K. Galbraith does, is like spinning prayer wheels: it may get you good marks but it doesn't help you understand what's going on.

• The universal instant availability of entertainment geared to a national professional standard has severely reduced the demand for entertainment pitched to regional or local standards. "The trouble with show business today," Jack Benny told Tom Sloan of the BBC, "is that there is nowhere to go to find out how bad you can be." In sports, television killed off the minor leagues; in the cities, it killed off the night clubs. It has seriously diminished the demand for touring companies of all Broadway shows other than those that offer a look at the pubic hair of actors and actresses. (The increasing nudity in films is also a by-product of television, because that's what television can't offer.) Here, of course, television merely continues and accelerates a trend begun by the talking picture and the phonograph record. Certainly in proportion to the population and maybe in absolute numbers, there are fewer people making a living in America today as entertainers and artists—though those few who do make a living probably live a good deal better than their forebears.

Television itself, in America, has been extremely inhospitable to all artistic effort that is designed to remain in the memory. It is more than possible—though far from certain—that television will end up diminishing the pool of trained talent from which significant artists can be drawn, and that any reduction in this pool produces a reduction in the number of artists. Setting out on an artistic career is a bad gamble at best; if there are to be rewards only for big winners, some who could have made important contributions may be rational enough to decide that the risks are too

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great. Whatever the social values of amateurism, the fact is that significant contributions to an art form can be made only by those who dedicate to it full time and energy. A diminution of their numbers would threaten "the quality of life."

• Increasing proportions of people have received increasing proportions of what they think they know from the vicarious experiences of television. This, too, extends and accelerates a trend, which John Dewey was the first to remark more than seventy years ago. Civilization is a coin with two sides; people who live in cities know a great deal less about the natural world than people who live on farms; thus, Dewey argued, education in the cities should be careful to provide as much experience as possible, even at some sacrifice of abstract reasoning. The growth of electronic media, especially television, has vastly expanded the extent to which people learn (or think they learn) at second hand, without employing the trial-and-error, reward-and-punishment, successive approximation processes which are the basic human equipment for learning. Moreover, the apparent data base is shared by young and old, and neither group has experienced much of what it thinks it knows.

When Spiro Agnew was grandly denouncing the young, the New York *Times* reacted angrily in an editorial acclaiming the new generation as "the best-informed in history"—but all that was really meant by the praise was that the young talked about the same currently fashionable ideas and stories that bemused their elders. To the extent that the conflict between generations in the 1960's was exacerbated by differences in perception, the cause was not a great difference in experience between the two groups (which has always been the case and never makes the real trouble: people tend to honor each other's different experiences) but a great similarity in the vicarious experience which had become the base of knowledge for both. Of knowledge, but not of wisdom; for the consciousness of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom, and the media mask the consciousness of ignorance.

We touch here, daintily, on the McLuhan problem. Much of what McLuhan has written is simply ignorant and wrong (especially the widely accepted argument that sequence is obsolete: the heart of the television experience is remote control of the viewer's time, and the fundament of the computer, McLuhan's other example, is the rigorously sequential flow chart). The urgent statement that the medium is the message means no more (probably much less) than the old saw that the style is the man. The hopelessness of the "hot" and "cool" stuff as tools for analysis should be obvious to anyone with a minimally sophisticated mind. But McLuhan's instinct that something new has happened with the introduction of television—a widely shared instinct, accounting for his sales and reputation—cannot be dismissed quite so easily.

The viewing experience *does* seem more of-a-piece than the reading experience—that is, the differences between reading a newspaper and reading a novel seem greater than the differences between looking at a televised movie and looking at a documentary. This homogenization of what ought by rights to be different experiences is the strangeness of television. The prattle about media and messages hides the truth, because it reduces complex experience to simple statement and because it falsely proclaims that other media have similar characteristics. They do not. Content changed the nature of the radio experience drastically: the Philharmonic, Jack Benny, The Shadow, and Elmer Davis offered very different experiences indeed. And the content of television is nearly as varied as that of radio in the 1940's (there is much less good music)—but everybody feels that somehow it's "all the same."

A possible explanation of this almost universal attitude is that different radio programs demanded very different levels of attention. A few were really absorbing; most could be heard while doing the dishes or school homework or while daydreaming; some could be satisfactory background for reading a book. But watching television is an activity that excludes doing anything else except eating and knitting. The requisite minimum level of attention is fairly high. At the same time, unlike films or plays in a properly designed theater, televised pictures do not absorb the peripheral vision; and it may be that the attainable maximum level of attention is fairly low. At best, the spread between minimum and maximum is much reduced from that experienced in the use of other media.

In such an atmosphere individuality must carry greater burdens than it can manage. Thus people and issues burn themselves out with unprecedented speed. Worst of all, perhaps, television becomes ineffective at performing what has always been seen as the most important social and political role of any medium: powerful at creating celebrity, it cannot legitimate leadership or attitude. There is a spurious equality of stimuli. It should not be forgotten, of course, that radio gave legitimacy to some queer and dangerous characters, among them Adolf Hitler, Father Coughlin, and Huey Long. ("I'm not going to have anything very important to say for the first few minutes, so you can call up your friends and neighbors and tell them that Huey P. Long is talking at you—United States Senator from Louisiana.") The normative quality of television—the tendency of initially impressive personalities or ideas to wear out quickly—probably limits the damage as well as the good that can be done through the use of the medium. But the subject is worth much greater attention than it has yet received.

• Men, women, and children have all been

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given the notion that life can be entertaining all the time. As Daniel Boorstin pointed out in *The Image*, "There was a time when the reader of an unexciting newspaper would remark, 'How dull is the world today!' Nowadays he says, 'What a dull newspaper!' " A great deal of current societal misfortune that is investigated under political and psychological headings more probably traces to this pervasive attitude. In England, where people pay for their television service with a set tax, the matter may be stated directly: "What I want is a funny program at 6 P.M. each day while I am eating my evening meal," a man wrote to the BBC. "I pay you six pounds a year." Similarly, John Leonard of the New York *Times Book Review* demands a news service that will make him scream (though he doesn't want a news service that might make him chuckle). Most comment about the contents of the medium is suffused with a fear of being thrown back on other resources, by which one can achieve only with effort, or maybe not at all, the pleasures gained from television. A very high fraction of the world's population—probably as much as a quarter of it—has become addicted to the box. It is a phenomenon of unmeasured but clearly major importance in the conduct of all the world's business.

How a society, and its agencies of government, should deal with television addiction is an extraordinarily difficult question. Even in this age of affirmative action, law is much more effective at keeping people and businesses from doing things thought undesirable than it is at making them do what public policy wants them to do. The Communications Act of 1934 specifically prohibits the Federal Communications Commission from telling broadcasters what programs they should carry, though not every Commissioner seems impressed with this section of the law. ("The Act forbids *me* to interfere in programming," Rosel Hyde liked to say when he was Chairman, "but it seems not to forbid some of my colleagues.") The requirement that stations operate to serve "public convenience, interest, and necessity" is a pet Congressional phrase rather brainlessly moved over from the Transportation Act of 1920. There, Judge Henry Friendly once noted, it "conveyed a fair degree of meaning [because] the issue was whether new or duplicating railroad construction should be authorized or an existing line abandoned"; in the Communications Act "the standard was almost drained of meaning . . . [because] the issue was almost never the need for broadcasting service but rather who should render it."

Yet for all the folly of a standard of "public convenience, interest, or necessity," something must be done about an area of enterprise where competition left to itself will tend to standardize product in an unfortunate way. To overcome the homogenizing qualities of the medium requires a content so strongly different from normal programming that it probably can appeal only to minorities too small to carry the costs of production under an advertiser-supported system, or any other democratically controlled system. A degree of aristocratic intervention is clearly indicated.

At bottom, the societal problem is also the problem that directly faces the private entrepreneurs of the broadcasting system: how to allocate the revenues. The question is made much more difficult by the fact that, in the words of the BBC's Huw Wheldon, "It is programs that make policy and not policy that makes programs." Nobody seriously wants the government involved in making programs, and nobody who has even a nodding acquaintance with television programming in Eastern Europe will want programs made to express policy. Still, there are some attractive ideas for government intervention in the determination of what goes on the air.

For one thing, the time given to commercials, and the number of commercial interruptions, can be restricted. E. William Henry, while Chairman of the FCC, tried to write into regulations the National Association of Broadcasters' voluntary code on maximum commercial minutes, but Congressional friends of the broadcasters made strong objection. Henry's authority in Washington derived mostly from his personal friendship with the Kennedys, and after Johnson's accession he no longer had the clout to do anything about this quite modest suggestion. If restriction on the number of minutes would reduce income too far, results as valuable might be achieved by restricting the number of interruptions. The European state broadcasting systems require the grouping of commercials in "pods" at specified hours. These pods in fact get heavy viewing (RAI in Italy helps assure the viewing by supplying a running gag of ten-second cartoon bursts—comic characters watching a tennis match or dodging traffic or missing a golf ball—which interrupt the string of commercials; a perfect way to deal with the problem). In any event, four breaks an hour for commercial messages (the British ITA rules call for three) would seem a reasonable maximum to impose on broadcasters who are using scarce frequency spectrum for a token annual fee.

Advertising to children should certainly be stopped: despicable as an idea, it rarely improves in execution. No harm is done by convincing a college girl that she will be sexier if she brushes her teeth with Ultra-Brite, and some good may be done by selling a housewife on the analgesic virtues of Anacin: belief in the efficacy of a harmless pill helps the pill work, and is a great deal cheaper than psychoanalysis, both for the individual and for society. But establishing the difference between reality and fantasy is one of the central tasks of childhood, and advertising gets in the way. Bruno Bettelheim warned some years ago that children can "lose the ability to learn from

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reality because life experiences are more complicated than the ones they see on the screen. . . . This being seduced into passivity and discouraged about facing life actively on one's own is the real danger of TV." Advertising, always as uncomplicated and as memorable as its creators can make it, multiplies the danger.

Of course, there must be television for children, especially on Saturday morning. Demanding that the networks and stations supply such programming without compensation will not produce much to look at, and the best solution would probably be a government fund to sustain the production of children's shows. Assuming an average cost of $80,000 an hour and two reruns for each hour, $10 million (three-tenths of 1 per cent of the 1971-72 federal subsidy to the public schools) would pay the program costs of filling every network's schedule from eight in the morning to one in the afternoon every Saturday. Though one shudders at the thought of who would in fact wind up on the board allocating the money and what most of it would be spent to produce, a certain number of talented people could probably force their way to the trough. Networks as well as independent packagers could be made eligible for production grants, and it isn't hard to imagine incentive systems (like a renewed grant for the right to use again, in another season, particularly prized programs from previous years). There would still be competition, and probably there should still be ratings (by narrowly-specified age groups, one hopes); but there might equally be a sense that someone real is watching, and there might not be as much pandering as presently goes on.

ANOTHER good proposal for government intervention would involve the licensing of *networks*. The license should extend for fairly long periods (the British model for the ITA "contractors" is seven years), and be renewable only on proof of minimum performance. There is no rhyme or reason to the present system whereby stations are licensed and held responsible for programs disseminated by networks which are not licensed. It is true that the FCC acts as though it had regulatory power over the networks, because the networks make their money on the stations they own; challenges to what the network does can easily be directed to these stations. But the exercise of demanding program proposals from stations which will get all their significant programming from a network has been a demeaning experience for everyone involved. Worse, it has allowed the networks to be increasingly irresponsible in their search for maximum audience.

One must tread here with great care. The charge that television is intellectually inconsequential comes with ill grace from a literary and academic community that regards Norman Mailer as a giant and Marshall McLuhan as an insightful guide and R. D. Laing as a profound philosopher —a community that made *The Greening of America* the most talked-about book of its season. When FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson says that "television is the candy the child molester gives your child," one is dealing with paranoia, not with policy. Much of the hostility to the networks derives from deep-seated needs of critics who *must* believe in a great conspiracy that keeps other people from being just like themselves; and some of it is motivated by the critics' desire to keep lesser breeds from having too good a time. (This is not an unusual attitude on the Left, where entertainment has replaced religion as the perceived opiate of the masses; as long ago as the 1920's, Thomas Mann's Settembrini cynically warned that "Music is politically suspect.") But if there is to be any audience at all for serious programming, the nation needs the networks: "The beautiful and to many people obscene thing about the networks," Richard Jencks said while president of the CBS Broadcast Group, "is that we bring our own audience. We go to the carny tent with our crowd. Our show on the health crisis draws twenty million people, while the same show on educational television would draw half a million."

The risks that a network runs when it programs a more ambitious hour are much greater than most critics realize. Television viewing is a little like cigarette purchasing: people have brands and brand loyalties. A viewer driven off a channel of a Wednesday night because what appears there is too heavy for him after a day's work (or, worse yet, too poorly done: those who aim their sights high are likely to miss completely) may permanently switch his Wednesday brand. "The audience for a special," Frank Stanton said in the early 1960's, when his network had rather more of them, "is in large part people who came to see something else. Typically, it's a smaller audience than you would get for your usual programming." Confidential studies at CBS indicate that advertising for a forthcoming public-affairs show will *reduce* its audience. "But," Stanton added, "if you threw out the bad specials, I'd bet my bottom dollar the audience would be higher."

To the extent that the government demands a greater quantity of more ambitious programming from a network, it guarantees a high proportion of bad specials, and an average audience for nonstandard fare even lower than what such programs receive today. Nevertheless, some such constraints must be imposed, on the network level, where the resources exist to make successful effort possible. The sort of arrangement John Doerfer pushed on the networks when he was Chairman of the FCC could certainly be revived: each network should be required to provide an hour a week of nonfiction programming in prime time, for the benefit of the small minority who would watch—and also, more important, for the benefit of the men producing the program, to enable

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them to hone skills of reportage and assembly.

Even more necessary is an hour—maybe ninety minutes—a week from each network for what Gary Steiner calls "heavy entertainment." Now that there is a functioning National Endowment for the Arts, there is no longer any difficulty in creating an operating definition of heavy entertainment: it is a program put on by a group subsidized by NEA. In return for their access to the channel the networks can be ordered to devote their facilities periodically to extending the audience for the publicly supported performing arts. In return for their government subsidy, the performing groups can be ordered to make programs available to the networks at minimal charge (and to permit a limited number of rebroadcasts at a small additional charge). Here again, the benefits flow two ways—to an audience most of whom would never otherwise have the chance to see the serious artistic work being financed by their tax dollars, and to the performers occasionally pushed out of their holes in the ground and forced to think about how to please what will be, even at low ratings, much larger audiences than they have ever known before. Moreover, the networks remain really quite free from government control, because the choice among groups will be extremely large. This is not a matter of court- or commission-imposed "access": the network programmers' professional skills of selection are still employed—but on a more exalted level.

Commercial minutes could be sold during the natural breaks in such programs, but the networks would doubtless incur losses. Some of these could be passed on to the stronger affiliated stations by requiring those in larger markets to accept such programs without payment for their time; much of the rest could be absorbed by abolishing the recent "Westinghouse rule" limiting network feed, which has produced no programming of importance and has meant financial loss at nearly all stations in markets below the top thirty. And what net costs might be incurred would at least be related to the social responsibilities of broadcasting.

Though everybody in the industry has the shakes and the foundations keep pretending they know something not perceptible to the naked eye, it is unlikely in the extreme that the television audience is going to be "fragmented" by new technology. The notion that video cassettes are going to sell like phonograph records has to be wrong: the overwhelming majority of phonograph records sold are used by their purchasers to give an aural background to other activities, while television absorbs the time. Except for local sports, there is no source of viable programming to lure people to use the multiple channels of "the wired city." Two-thirds of the nation's television sets can receive six channels off the air *right now*, and the networks command more than 90 per cent of the prime-time audience; in fact, their proportion of the total audience for the night-time hours they were all on the air rose slightly in fall 1971, despite substantial advertising for the Public Broadcasting System and a steady growth in the number of independent stations on the air.

Experience in Canada (where cable television complete with nonbroadcast channels reaches two-thirds of the homes in cities like Vancouver and London, Ontario) has proved that there is simply no audience for the sort of amateur programming envisaged by the academic sponsors of the great phony issue of "access to media." There are various values in multiple channels, specifically for education and for ancillary medical and commercial services, generally in times of community crisis. But access to *audience* must be earned, with talent. There is something bittersweet funny about the sight of all the ardent young lawyers and graduate students and junior executives at the foundations, none of whom can write a song anyone would sing or a book anyone would read or a play anyone would act—none of whom holds a position which gives his thought significance in the lives of others or could gather twenty-five people to hear him speak at a meeting—"demanding" access to the great audience of an entertainment medium. There is no point in arguing with these people—they will have to find out for themselves—but there is no reason to take them seriously, either.

Pay TV would make a major difference here, and eventually would produce programming for minority tastes, though small-audience material would stand at the end of a long, long queue. But unless the advertiser-supported system comes to collapse in the toils of increasing costs or the Puritan war against cheerful consumption, the political obstacles to a pay system are likely to be impassable. "Radio and television," says Sol Taishoff, founder and still spiritual father of *Broadcasting* magazine, "are the only things the American people get for nothing." Economists can quibble about this, but that's certainly the way most people perceive it; and few of them are going to believe the pay-TV promoters' claims of all sorts of new goodies waiting behind the cash box—for the excellent reason that the claims are mostly false. The Ford Foundation may live in a hothouse (as indeed it does, in the most stunning piece of architectural symbolism in America) but everyone else must live in a cold, hard world.

Is there nothing more?

"It often seems to me," Richard Hoggart wrote in *The Uses of Literacy*, "that many of the people who do know something of the process described here have too easy a tolerance toward it. There are many who feel that they 'know all the arguments about cultural debasement,' and yet can take it all remarkably easily. Sometimes they

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confess to a rather pleasant ability to go culturally slumming, to 'enjoy looking at the s—t now and again.' I wonder how often this ease arises from the fact that, though they may know all the arguments, they do not really know the material, are not closely and consistently acquainted with the mass-produced entertainment which daily visits most people. In this way it is possible to live in a sort of clever man's paradise, without any real notion of the force of the assault outside."

But there is another side to the story. Though I can think of exceptions—expecially in the synthetic and manipulated counter-culture—I usually find when I take a look at popular entertainment that what seems to me the highest order of talent in the field has risen to the top. Most of the entertainers who have lasted any length of time in television—Lucille Ball, Carol Burnett, Jackie Gleason, Dick Van Dyke, Bob Hope, even (gulp!) Milton Berle—have possessed skills greater than those of most of their less successful competitors. Barbra Streisand is by every criterion I know one hell of a singer. In England, where all the episodes in a comedy series are written by the same hands, popularity comes over and over again to the work of certain individuals, and it can't be an accident. If in fact the structure of "mass-produced entertainment" rewards the higher orders of popular talent—if there is no Gresham's Law in entertainment—what remains of Hoggart's indictment?

Hoggart is concerned, as most people are, about what will happen in the future to people like himself. He worries about the loss of what he is willing to call a "saving remnant" in the working class—that portion of the young who are looking for a less instinctive, more civilized life than their parents have known. They can be seduced from these goals, Hoggart feels, by the spurious attractions of mass-produced entertainment—and in this context the high quality of talent involved in the entertainment is at best irrelevant, at worst an even more persuasive snake in the grass.

Unlike the Nicholas Johnsons and Harry Skornias and Thomas P. F. Hovings, who are in the afflatus business, Hoggart cares deeply about the audience; it gives his work a power that the others cannot generate. But despite the immense public attention paid to the young who have turned out as Hoggart predicted fifteen years ago (victims of "the wish to have things both ways, to do as we want and accept no consequences"), the saving remnant seems as large as ever. The adolescent whose desire for a comprehended life survives the distaste and distemper of his peer group will not be turned aside by the much less powerful forces of mass-produced entertainment. And there is no evidence whatever to back the belief—hope would be a better word—that mass entertainment can stimulate such ambitions in those who have not acquired them from genetic inheritance or family nurture. School can do it, through the example of a teacher or a friend; but television cannot.

FRETTING about the average level of television is like complaining about old age, an activity satisfying only to the speaker at the moment of speaking. All the English-language theater worth preserving since *Gammer Gurton's Needle* would not fill 5 per cent of the time the networks have to program each year. Yet it is equally true that, over time, a society cannot rely on life, on moon landings and assassinations, to provide its triumphs and tragedies. The really important criticism of television, especially in America, is that it has not sought tragedy or triumph in artifice and invention, and that the people connected with it have failed consistently in the obligation (which they share with the rest of us) to do the best they can.

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Sword of the Law

Milton Himmelfarb

"Civil Libertarians Denounce Georgia Legislator for Urging Lynch Law." That headline was never printed, because the civil libertarians said nothing. They let pass in silence this Associated Press story from Atlanta, which was published in the New York *Post* (February 5), but not in the *Times*:

> Georgia State Representative Julian Bond says blacks should take the law into their own hands to eliminate dope pushers in their neighborhoods. In an interview yesterday the black legislator expanded on statements he made in a speech earlier in the week to an Atlanta club. The 31-year-old Democrat said, "I was quoted correctly, but I did not intend execution on the street. But I do encourage summary judgment in the street."
>
> He said in his speech that blacks must let "the sellers of poison to our children know that the price of drugs is death at the hands of the community."
>
> Bond said in the interview, "I'm not advocating murder, but I am advocating community action. Drug dealers act outside the law, and the police seem unwilling or incapable of dealing with them.". . .
>
> During the interview Bond said that if members of the community "catch the pusher in action, they should inflict immediate discipline."
>
> Would that include physical harm?
>
> "It could," Bond replied.
>
> The legislator said he is "philosophically opposed" to vigilante groups. "But this drug situation is a crisis . . . and the citizen has to step in and take the law into his own hands," he said.

If another public figure in Georgia had said that, the civil libertarians would have made themselves heard. But their silence is not really important. What is important is that Representative Bond tells us some old questions are still alive that we wanted to think were dead.

There is a maxim, *gladius juris in terrorem malefactorum*, the sword of the law, for overawing evildoers. Iconographically, that looks like the sword in the hand of the goddess Justice (who, blindfolded, bears in her other hand a balance). Literarily, the maxim would seem to paraphrase the famous passage in the 13th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans: ". . . if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he [sc., *the ruler*] *beareth* not *the sword* in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger *to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*" Of the scholars I have consulted about the origin of *gladius juris*, etc., Professor Luitpold Wallach of the University of Illinois has been the most helpful. The references he was kind enough to provide lead me to believe that it is unlikely to antedate the Renaissance, and that it may reflect Roman law as much as the New Testament.

The Digest of Justinian (II, i, 3) cites Ulpian: *"Merum est imperium habere gladii potestatem ad animadvertendum facinorosos homines . . .,"* simple *imperium* is having the power of the sword for punishing criminals. (On *imperium* as "the legal power to enforce the law," see George Lichtheim, "Imperialism: I," Commentary, April 1970, and his first note.) *Gladii potestas,* "the power of [wielding] the sword," is interchangeable with *jus gladii,* "the law/right of [wielding] the sword"; of which *gladius juris,* "the sword of the law," may be a kind of mirror-image. In any event, there is a striking identity of thought between Ulpian the pagan lawyer and Paul the Christian—some would say, Paul the founder of Christianity—who said harsh things about law.

It is worth looking at Romans 13:

> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. [*New English Bible:* those who resist have only themselves to thank for the punishment they will receive.] For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this

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very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. [*NEB*: Discharge your obligations; pay tax and toll, reverence and respect, to those to whom they are due.]

There was a time when many made Luther the grandfather of German totalitarianism. The good German, a loyal subject, *Untertan*, respectfully obeyed authority, *die Obrigkeit*—which in practice also meant officialdom, down to the clerk with the rubber stamp behind the wicket. Since Luther was an unswerving Paulinist, his attitude toward authority, and Germany's attitude, could come only from Paul's "Let every soul be subject [*untertan*, in Luther's version of the New Testament] unto the higher powers [*Obrigkeit*]." Then, slowly, it occurred to people that Germany was not entirely Lutheran: besides all those Catholics there were also the Calvinists—including the Hohenzollerns, no less. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland were more undilutedly Lutheran, yet there was nothing Nazi about them.

"For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." On that verse a standard work, Strack and Billerbeck's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (1922-28), says something that will shock most Jews: "Concerning this tenet there was hardly any difference of opinion in the ancient Synagogue"—that is, Paul on the powers that be was expressing good Jewish doctrine. Strack and Billerbeck prove their point by quotation after quotation from intertestamental and rabbinical literature. For instance, in Berakhot (58a) we are told:

> Upon seeing kings of Israel one must pronounce this blessing: "Blessed [art Thou, etc.] who hast given of Thy glory to Thy worshippers"; upon seeing kings of the nations of the world one must say: "Blessed [art Thou, etc.] who hast given of Thy glory to Thy creatures." . . . even the [lowly] superintendent of an irrigation well has been appointed from heaven.

(Among the blessing formulas in a popular contemporary American edition of the prayer book is this, to be recited "on the occasion of seeing an exalted ruler": "Blessed art Thou [etc.], who hast given of Thy glory to flesh and blood.")

We tend to exaggerate the learnedness of our ancestors—though it is true that among Jews literacy was more nearly universal than among the peoples in whose midst they lived. The historian G. G. Coulton says that it would be unfair to compare medieval Jews and Christians for literacy. The more appropriate comparison would be between Jews and the Christians' professionally literate class, the priests. Even so, Coulton says, in medieval Europe the average Jew—let alone the average rabbi—was more literate than the average Christian priest.

Literate, not necessarily learned. The learned Jews were usually a minority. What the average Jew knew of Talmud and the rest of rabbinical literature he was apt to have picked up in the course of prayer (or from the Bible commentaries). Bits and pieces of rabbinical literature are in the prayer book to enable us formally to discharge our obligation of daily study, to allow us to say the Scholars' Kaddish afterward, and to teach us the virtues of the Rabbis. Thus the prayer book quotes (Berakhot, ad fin.): "The disciples of the wise"—i.e., the Rabbis—"increase peace in the world." A friend of mine likes to adduce this as evidence of humor in the Talmud.

The rabbinical literature the average Jew knew best was Pirqe Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers. He knew it because it was also liturgical, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath afternoon for half the year, between Passover and Rosh Ha-shanah. In Pirqe Avot (3:2) Jews learned from R. Hananiah the Vice-High Priest (of Paul's generation) to "pray for the welfare of government, because if not for the fear it inspires, a man would swallow up his neighbor alive." Within the Jewish tradition, of course, R. Hananiah is not original. In a way, he restates a verse in Jeremiah (29:7) that was to become especially popular with the founders of Reform Judaism: "Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for on its welfare yours will depend."

But the average pre-modern Jew, at least in Ashkenaz, knew prophetical hardly more than rabbinical literature. What he knew of the Prophets was mostly the *haftarot* following the Torah lessons. The average Jew, therefore, was probably unfamiliar with that verse from Jeremiah. If he saw a connection at all between R. Hananiah and the Bible, I think it was in R. Hananiah's echoing of a psalm—a psalm, moreover, that is prominent in the synagogue's ritual. With a pleasing symmetry, when Avot is not read on Sabbath afternoons, Psalms 104 and 120-134 are read. R. Hananiah's image is of a man swallowing up his neighbor alive. The 124th Psalm says: ". . . if it had not been that the Lord was for us/when men rose up against us,/then *they would have swallowed us up alive*. . . ./Blessed be the Lord,/who has not given us as prey to their teeth!/. . . Our help is in the name of the Lord,/who made heaven and earth."

What is more, R. Hananiah's adjective, "alive," is plural—*hayyim*—though the noun it modifies, "his neighbor," is singular. Isn't that because the psalm has the plural *hayyim*, modifying "us"? Again, the psalm says God saves us from being swallowed up alive, and R. Hananiah says government saves us. Isn't that because in his eyes government does God's work?

For more learned Jews, R. Hananiah's statement could have additional resonances. The an-

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notation by R. Elijah Gaon of Vilna in the standard edition of the Mishnah refers us to Prophet and Talmud. Habakkuk 1:13,14: ". . . why dost Thou look on while men are treacherous/and remain silent when the wicked man *swallows up* the man more righteous than he?/For Thou makest men like the fishes of the sea,/like creeping things that have no ruler over them." And 'Avodah Zarah 3b-4a:

> Why is it written (Habakkuk 1:14): "For Thou makest men like the fishes of the sea"? . . . As with the fishes of the sea, each fish greater than his fellow swallowing him up; so with men, if not for the fear that government inspires, each man greater than his fellow would swallow him up. And thus we learn in the Mishnah: "R. Hananiah the Vice-High Priest says: 'Pray for the welfare of government,' etc."

Centuries later Thomas Hobbes, so modern that he rejected not merely traditional religion but even classical philosophy, used a similar metaphor. He said that government alone saves us from the state of nature, in which man is wolf to man. Rabbis, Paul, Ulpian, Hobbes—an implausible, suggestive concordance.

Some historians interpret R. Hananiah's advice to pray for the welfare of government—specifically, the Roman Empire—as a conservative, prudential counter to the Zealots' "No king but God." Of R. Hananiah's quietist or pacifist (or passivist) attitude there are still other indications. In a midrash on Numbers 6:26—"The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace"—he says: "Great is peace, weighty as the entire creation; as it is said (Isaiah 45:7), 'I [God] form light and create darkness, I *make peace* and *create everything*.'" (Isaiah really has "I make peace and create *evil*," but R. Hananiah's way of citing Isaiah has been incorporated into our prayers, in the first blessing after *Barekhu* every morning. Was "create everything" actually in the Rabbis' Isaiah text, or did they have a kind of *ketiv-qere* tradition, writing "evil" but reading a euphemism, "everything"?) R. Hananiah's exaggeration in the Midrash—that peace is as weighty as all of creation—is normal rabbinical rhetoric, but it is also personal to him, cohering with what he says in Avot about government. The Zealots call for overthrowing Roman rule because only God is king, and R. Hananiah answers that the Roman government does God's work. They call for war, and he answers that peace is as weighty as the entire creation.

R. Hananiah lived at a time when, if the Jews had lost their sovereignty, they had not lost their fighting spirit, as successive rebellions against the might of the Roman Empire were to prove. Afterward his doctrine and attitude, not unchallenged in his time, became universal among us, and ever more pronounced—for better and worse. (David Daube's *Collaboration with Tyranny in Rabbinic Law** gives a fine brief account of this development.) Only yesterday—in the 19th century—a rabbi, quoted in Teddy Kollek and Moshe Pearlman's attractive *Jerusalem*,† praised a Muslim ruler for having "wrought fearful judgments on all wicked men and caused such fear and trembling that a small girl could walk in the streets carrying gold coins in her hand and no one would molest her." It was not that the rabbi loved Muslim rule, it was that he thought a ruler was doing God's work who kept the wicked from swallowing up the weak—which is to say, whose sword overawed evildoers.

Julian Bond is a responsible leader of the black community. His people know, and the drug pushers know, that the sword of the law has been blunted. For whatever reason—the incompetence, corruption, or malice of the police; or laws that make it hard to convict the guilty; or, simply, not enough room in the jails—the pushers are at large in the streets, hurting Mr. Bond's people. Courtroom justice having proved unavailing, he feels he must ratify street justice.

What Mr. Bond said was not original. He was not teaching his people, they had taught him. With them, as with all who are vulnerable and beset, it is not a philosophy of authoritarian personalities but simple fact that tolerable life in society is impossible when there is no sword to overawe evildoers. If the law allows its sword to be blunted, people will look elsewhere for a sharp one to protect them. The greatest terror is the terror of the state of nature—great fishes swallowing up small fishes, man wolf to man.

Suppose that in France, in 1968, the contest had been between the red-flag Communists and the black-flag anarchists. Does anyone doubt that every bourgeois *père de famille* would have voted red?

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*Oxford University Press, 1965.
†Random House, 1968.

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Liberalism and Purpose

James Q. Wilson

UNPOPULAR doctrines, even despised ones, have rarely lacked for defenders; for every heresy, there is a heretic. Contemporary liberalism, however, seems peculiarly without spokesmen, even though it is everywhere reviled and allegedly discredited. Radicals, of course, scorn liberals; but even Democratic Presidential candidates, most of whom have by some test a "liberal" record, vie in expressing their contempt for or indifference to the policies of their Democratic predecessors in the White House. Mr. Muskie tells us that liberals have accomplished little or nothing since the New Deal and implies that they have not even tried very hard. Scarcely a voice is heard in dissent.

Perhaps it is because liberalism, for the last three or four decades, has been the ruling philosophy that it so conspicuously lacks a reasoned explication. Doctrines are formulated by those otherwise without power, by outsiders. Liberals have not been outsiders for a long time. Indeed, if one searches for any statements that might be regarded as a more-than-pedestrian presentation of liberal ideas, one may have to go back as far as Herbert Croly's *The Promise of American Life* and, before that, to John Stuart Mill.

The reason for regretting the absence of a contemporary and serious defense of liberalism is that the leading criticisms of it are based on the assumption that liberal doctrines are essentially correct but that the will to implement them has been lacking. We are asked to take on faith that there are attainable goals all enlightened liberals seek; we are then shown, ostensibly, how liberal governments have failed to attain them because these governments are based on institutional incapacities ("interest-group pluralism," in the phrase of Theodore Lowi, or brokerage parties and a weak Presidency, in the view of James MacGregor Burns), or because they are operated by men who have been corrupted by power or made captive by self-seeking forces (the "military-industrial complex," in the phrase that Malcolm Moos put into the mouth of Dwight Eisenhower).

Those who once called themselves liberals and who wish to call themselves that again without embarrassment or qualification are turning increasingly to the subject of institutional reform. This is the message of both James MacGregor Burns* and David S. Broder† in their recent books. It is also, in a curious sense, the message of Richard M. Nixon; much of his domestic program has been animated by a desire for institutional renovation—cabinet reorganization, welfare reform, revenue sharing, and block grants.

The renewed interest in organization is perhaps an improvement over the recent efforts to explain the apparent stasis in American politics as a failure of "will." This was the message of the Kerner Commission in discussing riots and the plight of blacks; it was also the message of Ramsey Clark in discussing crime.** "Will" is nameless, shapeless, Hegelian; while it provides a splendid rhetorical device for assigning guilt, it supplies little sense of concrete direction or organizational process. And in any competition of wills, those elements of our society that bespeak pure will—pure love, pure hate; pure self-indulgence, pure terror; Consciousness III in the communes and calculated violence among the Weathermen—will always appear to have the advantage of greater commitment, greater "authenticity."

Liberals like Burns and Broder have seen that brink and are struggling back from it. Both books go to great pains to criticize the "dogmas" and "myths" of both the Left and the Right and to reject the revolutionary sloganizing of the various political cults. Pervading both books is a common urgency —the desire to restore a sense of responsibility to politics.

To these men responsibility means action guided by principle with due regard for consequences. The defect of the American government, they believe, is that it defeats such action, ignores such principles, and produces at best unintended consequences. Public policy is piecemeal, incremental, disjointed because our governing institutions are patchwork, decentralized, and uncoordinated. As a result, liberal Presidents are elected, each of whom is a "rhetorical radical, policy liberal, fiscal moderate, and institutional conservative." Large problems are not addressed by correspondingly bold actions; there is a failure of strategy and of priority at the outset and, with respect to the strategies that are adopted, the energies behind them are rapidly diffused in the endless maze of Congressional committees and bureaucratic agencies. As a result, we have "failed" to deal adequately with civil rights, medical care, poverty, housing, environmental control, economic management, and almost everything else.

The answer offered for this problem is a strong President—far stronger than even FDR or LBJ at his boldest—and strong, ideologically realigned political parties. Burns and Broder are in substantial agreement, though where Burns's account is romantic in tone

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* *Uncommon Sense*, Harper & Row, 196 pp., $6.95.

† *The Party's Over*, Harper & Row, 280 pp., $7.95.

** See my review of Clark's *Crime in America* in COMMENTARY, March 1971.

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and blurred in outline, Broder's is grainier, sharper. Neither has much to say about what history may someday call the "liberal deviation"—the flirtation with radically decentralized, highly participatory political structures. "To fragmentize is to conservatize," writes Burns. Most local governments, writes Broder, are "costly, inefficient, and undemocratic." Both authors even provide a few phrases of grudging admiration for the ability of Mayor Richard Daley to govern Chicago, perhaps the first kind words written about Mr. Daley by a leading journalist and a popular academic in five years.

By defining our present problems as ones of institutional capacity, Burns and Broder attempt to place the liberal creed back on the track from which it was dislodged by the war in Vietnam and the urban riots. A liberal Democratic administration could do nothing to prevent or control the domestic insurrections of the mid-1960's. It is not hard to understand why many people decided that such administrations were either weak, incompetent, or uncaring and why they then turned to anti-executive structures (Congress, decentralized bureaucracies, citizen participation) or to alternative ideologies. If a liberal Democratic administration was a bad thing, it must be *because* it was liberal, or Democratic, or administrative, or all three.

The Burns-Broder thesis is that things went wrong because these governments were not strong enough—they needed to be *more* Democratic (i.e., all parts of the government should be under the control of a single party) and *more* administrative (all parts of the government should be under firm executive leadership). One may not agree with this analysis, but it has a long and honorable history. "Energy in the executive," wrote Alexander Hamilton in *The Federalist Papers*, "is a leading element in the definition of good government."

The central question, in Hamilton's time and in our own, is: energy *toward what end*? The striking feature of the Burns and Broder books is that they have no well-worked-out answer to this question. To the extent they discuss it at all, it is either in moderately apocalyptic language about the collapse, decay, confusion, and disorder of the system and the loss of popular confidence in government (all of which may be real enough) or in quick summaries of the "ignored" recommendations of Presidential commissions set up to deal with crime, disorder, poverty, education, and the like. But these are not goals, they are problems.

A QUITE different analysis of the last decade is possible: it is not that government failed to address these problems, but that it did not know how to, and it would not have known any better if parties had been realigned and executives had been restructured. We do not know how to upgrade the educational levels of schoolchildren; we do not know how to reduce street crime in any substantial degree; we do not know how to mend broken families; we do not know how to get people off welfare and back into self-sustaining roles in society; we do not know how to change slums into clean and attractive living areas and keep them that way; above all we do not know how to get people to stop being bigots. On the plus side we have begun to learn a little bit about how to deal with drug addiction and pollution and there is not much doubt we shall soon be learning a great deal more.

The reforms proposed by Burns and Broder may or may not be worthwhile, but they are directed toward no clear purpose and thus are not stated in a way that permits evaluation. If they believe, as I think they do, that wholesale institutional change is impossible—that no new constitutional convention will be held—then they are under an obligation to tell us how their retail changes will better serve the ends they seek. In short, the resurrection of liberalism requires first a restatement of liberal objectives and a delineation of the means that exist to serve them. Any other kind of reform-mongering is the substitution of form for substance of the sort that made, in quieter times, the proposals of the Hoover Commission seem so strangely lifeless.

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least one clear goal to which questions of means do not apply: the redistribution of income. There is no doubt that the government can do this if it wishes to—taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another is a skill that the Internal Revenue Service has sharpened to a fine edge. Burns and Broder repeat the well-known facts: the allocation of income shares has not changed appreciably in this country for at least two decades, and the total effect of the present tax system is to maintain, and possibly even worsen, this pattern of allocation.

They thus hint at what is in fact the central domestic issue facing liberalism: whether to endorse massive income redistribution or to continue instead to emphasize oiling the hinges of opportunity. Equality or liberty, that is the choice. It is a matter of the utmost gravity, with consequences hard to foresee. An important change in the existing method of income distribution will affect fundamental matters: the conception of work, the rationing of amenities, the incentive structure of many occupations, the price of many goods and services, the nature of class consciousness. There is no reason to believe we cannot redistribute income; the issue is, should we?

Our failure to think through this matter is reflected in the failure of the one attempt so far made to achieve a measure of redistribution—the Family Assistance Plan, at least as it was originally proposed. We will never understand the decade of the 1960's, the changing meaning of liberalism, or the behavior of the institutions of government unless we first understand how and why it happened that a Republican President proposed to redistribute income and was defeated in his effort to do so by the Democratic party, and especially by those elements of it normally thought of as essential to a "realigned" party (blacks, Northern white liberals, and organized professionals).

THE central foreign-policy issue facing liberalism is addressed in somewhat more detail by Burns (but scarcely at all by Broder): whether liberals will continue to believe that the United States has important international obligations or whether it will endorse a return to benign isolationism (disguised, of course, by such phrases as "we cannot be the policeman of the world," or "we should not support unpopular governments," or "the cold war is over"). Except for a commitment to Israel, liberals today have no clear policy at all with respect to international peacekeeping or to expansionist regimes. And a verbal formula will not suffice: other than military capacity, the crucial variable in a credible foreign policy is determination. Altered institutional arrangements may make it easier or harder to express that determination, but they are not likely to remedy any substantial shortage of it.

One can argue that strengthened institutions are essential regardless of the goals one seeks, that realigned parties and a more powerful President are important in and of themselves. Perhaps. Some of the reforms suggested by David Broder might commend themselves to us without regard to the question of objectives, or because we are in substantial agreement on objectives. But I doubt it: any institutional change implies an objective, and if the objective is there implicitly, why not explicitly? And as for the general consensus, I thought that is where we all began: with the shattering in the 1960's of an assumed agreement on fundamentals.

BUT let us suppose that we know what we want: will a strong executive backed by a realigned party with disciplined Congressional members produce a distinctively greater capacity to achieve certain ends? To a degree, it no doubt will; Great Britain has for decades had the party and political structure that Burns and Broder recommend, and it has accomplished things that we have been unable to do: it has controlled more rigorously the use of private land, cleaned up more expeditiously its polluted air and water, and adopted much earlier certain welfare services, such as a national health plan, toward which we are only now struggling. But these are precisely the tasks that are easiest to do, because the technology for them exists, and I suspect that we are already moving fairly steadily in the required direction—although certain structural changes would be desirable if these and no others are thought to be the central issues of our time. I doubt that either Burns or Broder thinks that this is the case; with respect to what remains, however, it is far from clear that strengthening our political structure will address the problem in its essence.

THE moving final chapter of Broder's book expresses his despair with the public drift that led Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann to ask, fifty or sixty years ago, for a greater national sense of mastery and destiny. Their purposes were also unclear, or at least not clearly stated, and they also were aware that there are things no government could or should do, though they did not dwell on them. Liberal thought has always been at its sharpest when dealing with manageable problems ("by what means do we protect the environment") or with fragile processes ("free speech has a preferred position"). It has always been least clear on matters of fundamental purpose; in truth it has always taken those for granted or assumed that purpose would emerge out of process. Thus, the most serious statement of liberalism remains that bloodless, perpetual-motion machine of utilitarianism constructed in the last century by John Stuart Mill.

I think Broder implies this when he notes the aspects of American life where he finds a sense of purpose and of responsibility. "In the small society of Beaver Island," he writes, "family ties, a shared religious faith, and a fierce . . . determination to survive impel men and women spontaneously to clean and paint the schoolhouse, build a medical center, and put up a new dock." The larger society, rejecting religion, tradition, and the authority of law-givers, is a country "lost to [the] senses" of the people, and they in turn, in Tocqueville's words, "retire into a narrow and unenlightened selfishness." It is *this* loss, more than governmental incapacity, that disturbs Broder and perhaps also Burns, as it must disturb us all.

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Movie Musicals

William S. Pechter

Though I'm very fond of movie musicals, I rarely go to them; or perhaps I should say I rarely go *because* I'm very fond of them. I may be unduly exclusive in what I want a film musical to be, but among the things I don't want are musical films whose principals don't dance, or whose musical numbers are confined by some "realistic" premise (e.g., a show within the show), or reverential transcriptions of hit Broadway shows. (For reasons one and three, among others, you'll see no review of *Fiddler on the Roof* here.) Of course, I'm aware that the kind of film musical I want is dead as the proverbial dodo; the last (and, I think, best) instance of the genre at its peak was *The Band Wagon* in 1953, and it's been seventeen years now since I've seen a film which came even momentarily within striking distance of those musicals of which I'm fondest.

Because I'm fond of movies, I rarely go to Ken Russell movies; I'm willing to waive my right to an opinion on *The Music Lovers* and *The Devils* rather than sit through them. But I can restrain my critic's lust for opinion only so long, and so I went to see Ken Russell's *The Boy Friend*. I gather that the Sandy Wilson show from which Russell's film is adapted was an intimately scaled, affectionate evocation of the stage musicals of the 20's and 30's, and that, to the proceedings, Russell's loveless super-spoof contributes the character of De Thrill, a flamboyant Hollywood director watching the tacky show within the show as a prospective movie property and simultaneously reimagining it on the grandiose scale of his own productions. De Thrill, along with everything else in the movie, is mocked, but what is Ken Russell if not De Thrill, the genius director pouncing on this flimsy work as a vehicle for the display of his own virtuosity? The extension, via De Thrill, of *The Boy Friend* into the world of the movies allows Russell to add Busby Berkeley-like production numbers to the things made fun of, but it is a bad joke, both because (as Eric Bentley observed in reviewing the original stage show) good jokes are against one's own generation, and because Busby Berkeley in particular, being unintentionally funny to begin with, is virtually parody-proof. (Which is not to say that one can't, as in *Singin' in the Rain*, do a number wittily imitating the style of Busby Berkeley that actually far surpasses the original.) The laughter of the audience watching Russell's spoof is really no different from that of the audience watching the recent camp revival of Berkeley's own *The Gang's All Here*, with the exception that there is nothing in the Russell film as funny as the dancing bananas number in the Berkeley. To the extent that outrageous taste and failed seriousness are constituents of camp, Berkeley is the essence of camp; he is the melodramatist of the movie musical, and it is, in great measure, his utter humorlessness which makes him seem so ridiculous. But, though I wasn't around at the time, I doubt, Ken Russell's smug assumption to the contrary, that the audience of the early 30's took Berkeley any more seriously than one does today—that is, other than the kind of people in it who now find Russell's film the epitome of wit and style. And the depressing thing about being in the audience now laughing in condescension at *The Gang's All Here* (condescension not only toward Berkeley but toward the audience imagined once to have taken him seriously) is that the laughter is so thoroughly an instance of herd response. Individually, most of these people would probably tune out the film for the tedium it mainly is if they happened to come across it on television; collectively, the derisive acknowledgment of that tedium offers an occasion for self-congratulation. Watching *The Gang's All Here* in this ambience, I had the unpleasant sensation of finding myself once again in a 1950's college audience, whose members could always be counted on to laugh at every film except for a handful of bad ones (as contrasted with a college audience of today, whose members can be counted on to sit with solemn film-cult reverence through every film except for a handful of good ones).

But the tedium of *The Gang's All Here* (which, apart from the banana number, is far from Berkeley's best work, lacking, as it does, his best work's fantastic energy and manic precision, and the mad splendor these things can occasionally attain) is nothing compared to the tedium of *The Boy Friend*. At the least, *The Gang's All Here* has two nostalgia-drenched, 40's-vintage pop tunes in "Journey to a Star" and "No Love, No Nothin'," and room for Eugene Pallette, Edward Everett Horton, and Charlotte Greenwood to do their turns. *The Boy Friend* has a sweet, nebulous score (the witty arrangement of which, by Peter Maxwell Davies, is the best thing in the movie), a sweet, nebulous leading lady in Twiggy, and a rubber-legged, comic dancer in the Ray Bolger tradition in Tommy Tune, but these small attractions are so nearly buried beneath the weight of the director's ponderous touches as to be all but canceled out. Yet, even had they survived this, it's doubtful they could have escaped the work's prevailing rancidness.

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Singin' in the Rain, as have other musicals, sharply satirized the vanity of show folk, but Jean Hagen's dumb movie star is treated with an exemplary generosity compared with the characters in *The Boy Friend,* almost all of whom are seen as positively steeped in malicious pettiness. Russell may think he's making *Singin' in the Rain*—at the end, De Thrill announces *Singin' in the Rain* will be his next work rather than *The Boy Friend*—but *The Boy Friend,* in Ken Russell's busy hands, is less the kin of Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds than of Malcolm McDowell performing "Singin' in the Rain" as he ostentatiously bashes another victim in *A Clockwork Orange.*

PROBABLY, a fondness for musicals is impossible to argue objectively; either you like them, or you don't, and people whose tastes I share on almost everything else will still part company with me when a movie erupts into song and dance. I suppose there is some correlation between one's responsiveness to musicals and to fantasy in general. But though successful works of fantasy—in films, works such as *Ugetsu* and *Beauty and the Beast*—create a world which, at least for the work's duration, absorbs us and compels belief, musicals, while at their best creating a world, create a world to which, far from losing ourselves in it, we are never quite admitted. It's not merely by random choice that, when Brecht wished to achieve his famous "alienation" effect, he would have one of his characters sing a song.

The Boy Friend is a musical by and for people who don't like musicals, who find them silly. (As if in acknowledgment of that fact, a Mario Lanza film was brought in as a co-feature once business started to sag at the San Francisco theater where *The Boy Friend* opened.) There *is* something almost always at least on the verge of being silly about a character in a play or movie suddenly breaking into dance or song, as I who was dragged as a child through the Golden Age of Broadway musicals know only too well. ("Gee, Curly, it sure is a beautiful morning"/"It sure is, Laurie; it sorta kinda makes ya wanta sing, don't it?"—will stand as a composite memory of the experience.) But the musical theater that gave birth to the Rodgers and Hammerstein classics of Broadway Americana also saw the creation of *Pal Joey, Guys and Dolls,* and *Wonderful Town.* And, in the movies, during roughly the same period as that in which Nelson Eddy was bellowing at Jeanette MacDonald and Busby Berkeley was staging those exercises in astro-geometry which *The Boy Friend* spoofs, there were also made, in the best of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers films, musical comedies which in their unpretentiousness and mellifluous grace have arguably never been surpassed, on the stage or in the movies. And later, during the period of backstage biographies of assorted vaudeville stars and Tin Pan Alley tunesmiths *(The Dolly Sisters, I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now,* etc.), and, somewhat later still, while Mario Lanza was bellowing at Kathryn Grayson, a different strain of movie musicals was eventuating in works as imaginative and delightful as *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Band Wagon.*

Pauline Kael has described musicals as "at their best . . . an apotheosis of romance," and, while this characterization of them is true enough, it seems to me not quite to define or exhaust all there is to be said about the uniqueness of the genre. When Ginger Rogers, who has been invulnerably resistant to the attentions of Fred Astaire until then, suddenly collapses in a state of rapt amazement at the conclusion of their first dance (to "Night and Day") in *The Gay Divorcee,* one does feel it to be (though neither dance nor film is at the level of its best) a true romantic apotheosis: a summation and distillation of what it means to "fall in love." Yet if such moments are rarely attained, it's not for lack of being sought after by non-musical movie genres, most of which revolve no less fixedly than musicals around the drama of will-or-won't the hero and heroine get together. Arlene Croce, in a piece on the Astaire-Rogers films which appeared in *Ballet Review* several years ago and which probably remains the best essay that has been written on movie musicals, has argued for the supremacy among their films (and, implicitly, among musical films generally) of *Swing Time* because of the primacy in it of the dance: its total propulsion by a series of situations in which the chief issue is, will-or-won't conditions enable hero and heroine to dance. If I persist in preferring Miss Croce's acknowledged runner-up, *Top Hat* (which never goes dead, as *Swing Time* occasionally does, between the dances), it's not for rejecting her criterion of dance as the lifeblood of movie musicals. A musical either soars or it is earthbound, and musicals in which the principals don't dance are untranscendingly earthbound from the start. It follows, then, that the question of will-they-or-won't-they get together inevitably translates into will-they-or-won't-they dance in *Top Hat* no less than in *Swing Time,* and in every other fulfilled musical no less than in these. We fervently wish to see them get together just so we may watch them dance; and their dancing, the magic they make together, is at once the magnet of their union and its celebration.

WHEN Astaire and Rogers aren't dancing in *Top Hat* or *Swing Time* or any of their other 30's films, the films become straight comedies. What happened in the best of movie musicals in the 40's and early 50's was an evolution of the genre into one in which all elements were touched by that sense of lyric flight which theretofore had attached itself only to the moments of actual dance. If this meant that the musical increasingly became a director's medium with its greater emphasis on a totality of style (a director's medium, one should add, virtually all of whose finest achievements are the work of either Vincente Minnelli or the team of Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly), it was not for any diminution in it of the prominence of the dancer. Of the musicals of the 40's and 50's I cherish most, I can think of only one—Minnelli's *Meet Me in St. Louis* with Judy Garland—which doesn't star either Astaire or Gene Kelly, and *Meet*

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Me in St. Louis is probably unique among musical films in being able to stand as a wholly achieved work even without its musical sequences. (One might say the same of Cukor's *A Star is Born* of a decade later, if the Cukor didn't seem really to be a dramatic film with songs added.) But a film like *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers,* despite all the vigor of Michael Kidd's choreography, seems fundamentally to founder in the fact of its stars, Jane Powell and Howard Keel, not dancing but being essentially the stodgy center of the dancing that takes place around them; though the film, likable as it is, falters elsewhere as well. In fact, the masterpieces of the genre are almost as few as its masters: *Top Hat, Meet Me in St. Louis,* the Donen-Kelly *On the Town* and *Singin' in the Rain,* and Minnelli's *The Band Wagon,* with Minnelli's *An American in Paris,* despite its tendency to bog down in pastiche, probably heading up the short list of near-misses.

Of these, *On the Town* might be called the avant-garde musical in the sense that Ford's *Wagonmaster* is an avant-garde Western: a work pressing out to the formal limits of its genre, and becoming, in the case of *On the Town,* virtually one extended dance with comic-romantic interludes (it's the uninspired comedy which is the film's chief blemish; that, and the largely uninspired score which adds new songs to Leonard Bernstein's original, and inexplicably drops, in "Lucky to Be Me" and "Some Other Time," what are probably Bernstein's best and next-best popular songs). (*On the Town* is probably also the least sentimental of musicals: at the end, the three sailors leave their girls and return from their day's shore leave to their ship, having formed no lasting attachments, while a new trio of sailors arrives to take their place.) *On the Town* was made in 1949; *Singin' in the Rain* followed in 1952 and *The Band Wagon* in 1953; and, if neither of the latter films seems quite as formally audacious as the earlier one, both exceed it, I think, in the consistency of their inventiveness. But four years after *On the Town*'s adventurous extension of the genre, with *The Band Wagon*'s rich fulfillment of it, the movie musical as an original form in effect simply ceased to exist, leaving, apart from the few films mentioned, mainly an anthology of bits and pieces: the "Coffee Time" dance in *Yolanda and the Thief*; the "Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" number from *The Harvey Girls*; the kitschy but irresistible *chinoiserie* of the "Limehouse Blues" dance in *Ziegfeld Follies*; the musical numbers, title "ballet" excepted, from *The Pirate;* and musical numbers from *Easter Parade, The Barkleys of Broadway* (an oddly sour reunion in 1949 of Astaire with Ginger Rogers), *Royal Wedding,* and some but not much more. When one speaks of the American Western, one thinks of a rich tradition; when one speaks of the musical, a few masterworks and a miscellany of privileged moments.

And yet the camera gravitates to the dance with a natural affinity, an affinity of media which find their expression in physical movement. Why the genre of the movie musical should have so thoroughly dried up is in part attributable to high finance: musicals are expensive to make and erratic at the box office, and, with the competition from television, it became safer to invest in mammoth adaptations of proven Broadway hits; the question is no longer, will-they-or-won't-they get to dance, but will each new musical sink or save such-and-such studio. But the extinction of the original musical, always the work of a few gifted individuals, is surely owed also to the loss of those individuals' gifts, whether through their retirement, decline, diminished interest, or distraction elsewhere. Musicals are an aristocratic creation; De Sica and others have demonstrated that everyone is a potential film actor, but no one has gone very far with the democratic proposition that anyone can sing and dance (and it is largely this consciousness of its performers' special gifts which accounts, I think, for the exclusion one feels from the world of musicals, and, for me, the faint letdown I always experience at their conclusion on being thrust from contemplation of so appealing but self-contained a fantasy world out into the prosaic streets). Indeed, the film of *Guys and Dolls* falling flat on its face with Brando, Sinatra, and Jean Simmons under Joseph L. Mankiewicz's direction only goes to show how far good musicals are beyond the reach of even the most gifted, if inappositely gifted, performers. For all the talent involved in the effort, a *Guys and Dolls* can't even begin to take flight: to convey that sense of poetry in motion which characterizes musicals at their best. And if the "poetry" of even the best musicals is only frivolous light verse, it is this with a perfect sense of its own proportions, and its frivolity of a kind which only a considerable refinement of taste has made possible.

The Band Wagon, in which some performers make a mess of staging a production of *Oedipus Rex* which they finally scrap in favor of a musical, is a case in point, since what is mocked is not *Oedipus Rex* and high culture, but the pretensions of theater people who don't know the limits of their capabilities. (A film like *Funny Face,* on the other hand, turns unpleasant in large part because of its derision, from the perspective of *haute couture,* of bohemianism, existentialism, and intellect generally, which seems inimical to the civilized spirit of its genre, unearned and philistine.) *The Band Wagon* is exemplary also in its concern, like that of *Swing Time, The Pirate, Singin' in the Rain,* etc., with entertainers and putting on a show; for, if it is the performers' magic that the musicals celebrate, what they ultimately celebrate is that seemingly effortless art through which, as if by magic, the commonplace is transformed; what they celebrate ultimately is the transformational magic of art itself. Though this is implicit throughout most of the best musicals, it is concentrated into what is almost a fable of the dancer's ability to transform the mundane into the lyrical in a brief sequence from the MGM revue, *Ziegfeld Follies,* that has nothing whatever to do with romantic apotheosis, and is as beautiful as

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anything in musicals on film. In it, while the director, Vincente Minnelli, does almost nothing but what is indispensable—that is to say, while he unfailingly respects the integrity of the dancer's space—Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly sing and dance to the Gershwins' "The Babbit and the Bromide"—two men, who have nothing to say, danced by two men, who don't need to say anything. Apart from the delight it provides in itself, the sequence offers now the additional excitement of seeing dance together, under the direction of the genre's most talented director, the two men who virtually divided the movie musical between them, with the irresistible opportunity given to compare them. Yet even to notice how much looser and more "conversational" is the older dancer's style does nothing to detract from the joy of the moment. Gene Kelly, after all, is only a movie star; Fred Astaire, in his own way as fully expressive a kinetic object as Chaplin or Keaton, is in himself a movie.

AMONG the several good reasons I could think of for not seeing *Cabaret* was Liza Minnelli. My feelings about Judy Garland, Miss Minnelli's mother and the obvious influence on her style, are extremely schizoid: in her movie musicals through the 50's, I always loved her; in her later, Miss Show Business or Judy-at-the-Palace role, she turned into something I couldn't stand. Miss Minnelli is already a more proficient dramatic actress than her mother probably would have ever been, though I doubt she will ever be capable of a performance of the emotional intensity of her mother's in *A Star Is Born*: a performance which draws, one feels, in an unrepeatable way on a nervous energy that has very little to do with the controlled art of the actor (Miss Garland's subsequent dramatic performances in *Judgment at Nuremberg* and *A Child Is Waiting* convey nothing of that power). Miss Minnelli's first dramatic performance in the lead role of a movie (in *The Sterile Cuckoo*) already seemed more accomplished than her mother's last ones, but in a way I found myself slightly disliking. I remember watching during, I believe, the early 50's Judy Garland doing a TV version of her Palace act, at the end of which she sat at the edge of the stage, and tearfully thanked the audience for its applause; the next morning, I read that the show had been done without a live audience. Miss Minnelli's acting reminds me of that; I feel similarly manipulated, similarly the victim of what seems always to verge on tear-jerking.

Miss Minnelli's singing, however, is something about which my feelings are entirely unmixed. Like her mother in her Palace role, and the interim heir to Garland's mantle, Barbra Streisand, Liza Minnelli, singing, is, not to put too fine a point on it, the *ne plus ultra* of tastelessness, a load of loud-mouthed, show-biz schmaltz. Like her predecessors in the tradition, Miss Minnelli isn't a singer but a belter; she doesn't sing a song, she sells it; and, whenever she opens her mouth to sing, in *Cabaret* or out, it's strictly Las Vegas. To say that a little of Garland (outside her movies) or Streisand or Minnelli sends me rushing for the antidote of some Ernestine Anderson or Sarah Vaughan or Billie Holiday is unfairly to load the comparison; one need hardly go to jazz to find a musical style and level of musicianship to use as a stick to beat Miss Streisand and Minnelli with. The fact is their muse isn't musical at all, but histrionic: every song becomes either a big, get-happy production number or a miniature tragedy. Nor is it a question of unfairly judging one style by the standards of another. The Garland-Streisand-Minnelli style, trading as it does in trumped-up emotion, is in itself an artistically corrupt one.

There was, however, one good reason for me to see *Cabaret*, and that was its director and choreographer, Bob Fosse. My affection for Fosse stems from his work as choreographer and dancer in the 1955 musical version of *My Sister Eileen*, an amiable film with two numbers, a dance of two rival suitors in an alley and an elaborate conga, that are among the wittiest sequences in movie musicals I know. That affection wasn't quite strong enough to bring me to see Fosse's one previous film as a director, *Sweet Charity*, since my feeling about remakes of Broadway shows applies *a fortiori* to shows that are themselves, as they increasingly are, remakes of old movies (*Sweet Charity* being a musical version of Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*; as I write, plans have been announced for a stage version of *An American in Paris*). But, on the strength of *Cabaret*, I regret that I missed *Sweet Charity*, for it must be said that *Cabaret* is, for only the second work of its director, an enormously impressive accomplishment. (I assume here what I cannot know: that the accomplishment is the director's. I've had occasion to admire the work of the film's photographer, Geoffrey Unsworth, before.) Fluently paced and cut together, firm in its command of composition and color, above all, stylistically controlled, *Cabaret* is virtually a showpiece of what, at its smoothly professional best, a conventionally well-made film might be.

But for all the skillfulness with which it has been made, what is it? I'm not much concerned with the movie's degree of faithfulness to Isherwood's original *Berlin Stories*; who in his right mind would attempt to judge a Liza Minnelli musical brought to the screen via Broadway by its fidelity to some short stories in the distant past of a series of adaptations? (Nor am I really able, some twenty years after having read them, to make any such detailed judgment without rereading; for all I know, the movie's maudlin subplot about an assimilated gigolo finding the courage to assert his Jewish identity in his true love for a Jewish girl may have its source in the original, though I rather doubt it.) But I do recall the stories well enough to be conscious of one large deviation from their spirit, which, original or no, is crushingly destructive to the present version, and that is its relentless moralizing. Continually played off against the private drama of Sally Bowles and her circle, and the world of the Kit Kat Klub where she works, is the rise of Nazism as seen in street beatings

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and murders, anti-Semitic persecution, and, in the heaviest touch of all, a proto-rally that begins with a close-up of the face of a blond, angelic boy from which the camera pans down to reveal the uniform of the Hitler Youth as he leads the crowd assembled in a beer garden in singing "Tomorrow Belongs to Me." Indeed, the scenes of Sally and the cabaret are at times intercut with these others so as to suggest that the former are somehow *responsible* for the latter, or at least partially culpable in its decadence and political apathy. There is, I suppose, some truth to the charge of culpability, but only insofar as it might be leveled at German society at large, decadent and otherwise, for which (not to say for Weimar culture) the synecdoche of the Kit Kat Klub makes a pretty flimsy stand-in. But what really makes the equation of private decadence and public totalitarianism insupportable is the fact of the film's playing the Sally Bowles scenes for heartache and poignancy, with Liza Minnelli only intensifying the conception of Sally as decadent waif (who got that way because her father didn't love her). It's as though the film were trying to balance on some scale a bowl of mush and the phalanx of Hitler's advancing army.

Of course, it's only a musical, you can say, which might be all right if *Cabaret* didn't have pretensions to being, in the words of its television advertisements, "more than a musical," or at least, and on more internal evidence, an "adult" musical, in touch with reality. (In fact, the film's one formal innovation—its restriction of its musical numbers to the stage of the cabaret while at the same time integrating them wholly with the non-musical drama—creates for me the effect of *Cabaret*'s not being a musical at all, but I won't press here for the exclusivity of my definitions.) The film's actual distance from this is damningly suggested by the gestures toward Weill and Brecht in the scenes with Joel Grey in the cabaret, which only serve to remind one of the distance between *The Threepenny Opera* (not to say *Mahagonny*) and *Cabaret*'s watered-down simulacrum. And, though Joel Grey does look like an acceptable facsimile in his white-face, death's-head make-up, his voice is at once thin and lacking in a cutting edge, while the musical score, when not instantly unmemorable, has a tendency to stick in one's mind in the rather hateful manner of "Hello, Dolly" and the jingles in some TV commercials. (Elsewhere, when it's not tugging on your heartstrings or imitating Weill and Brecht, the film is recreating figures from George Grosz in the cabaret audience in the literalistic fashion of *Moulin Rouge*'s recreations of Lautrec; not that such pastiche is unacceptable in a musical, *Moulin Rouge* itself having the effect of turning into a musical in one's memory at this distance from it.)

In fact, *Cabaret* is an adult musical in the same way that *High Noon* is an adult Western: adult by virtue of its wholesale infusion into its genre of the most cherished of liberaloid pieties and a free-floating, generalized pessimism. I hate to think of the consequences were *Cabaret*'s success, like *High Noon*'s, to spawn a flock of imitations: blue skies into gray, and all the downbeat trappings of Hollywood-style maturity. There has, of course, always been in American films a flirtation with a pessimism as shallow as the optimism of the standard Hollywood happy ending: a conviction that unhappy endings are in themselves more honest and "true to life"; and the pessimism of *Cabaret* (whose ending is perhaps not unhappy but "ambiguous") seems only the latest, if best dressed, embodiment of these things. I don't mean to suggest that musicals, quite apart from those of Brecht and Weill, can't of their nature cope successfully with emotions other than the high-spirited; Minnelli's films, in particular, have often been touched by a sense of melancholy. What I mean is quite simply that *Cabaret* is only the counterfeit of such a musical: that the *Weltschmerz* of *Cabaret* is not more but less profound than the gaiety of *Top Hat, Singin' in the Rain,* and (when it is gay) *The Band Wagon.*

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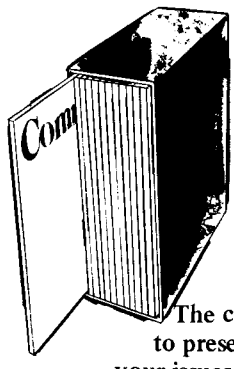

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Books in Review

Ishmael and Israel

THE TENANTS. By BERNARD MALAMUD. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 230 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by JACOB KORG

MALAMUD, a writer who has gained much in the past by taking risks, ventures onto particularly dangerous ground in *The Tenants*. His novel deals with the hostility between black man and Jew, a subject that would seem to offer immense difficulties and little satisfaction; it hovers perilously near allegory, and it ends by breaking out of the fictional form into something that, if I have understood it, approaches a confession of spiritual failure.

The protagonist, a Jewish novelist named Harry Lesser, insists on remaining in his apartment in a deserted tenement in order to finish the book he is writing. The house has become a wilderness of ruined flats, infiltrated by sinister squatters and vandals, and the Jewish landlord, who is compelled to keep it going at considerable expense for the sake of this last stubborn tenant, repeatedly pleads with Harry to leave. The isolation of this grotesque ivory tower is broken when a black writer named Willie Spearmint sets up his workshop in another apartment. The two become friends, then enemies as well. Their conflict has inescapable allegorical overtones, but their grievances against each other are personal as much as racial. Lesser helps and advises Willie, endures humiliation and anti-Semitic abuse from him, takes advantage of a black girl he knows, and enrages him by stealing the Jewish girl who is his mistress. Even this is less offensive than the anxious condescension both whites display toward the black man. Lesser, in telling Willie that his passionately indignant stories about black life need better technique, and the girlfriend, in worrying about Willie's future while she is deceiving him with Lesser, fend off the reality of his existence, ignoring his wishes while enjoying the familiar self-indulgence of Concern. Willie, the not entirely innocent victim of combined deception and good will, attacks Lesser, nearly throws him out of a window, and then inflicts the ultimate suffering on him by destroying his manuscript. Of Jews, he writes, "The way to black freedom is against them."

As this crescendo of savagery proceeds, we wonder, as we do in real life, how the antagonism between black man and Jew will end, but *The Tenants* offers no answer. While Willie and Lesser are counterparts, like Frank Alpine and Morris Bober in *The Assistant*, the pattern in which Frank is shown, not without a degree of sentimentality, adopting Morris's Jewish identity by sharing his suffering, is not inherent in the situation of *The Tenants*. Two racial identities are involved, not one, and whatever other risks Malamud may take, he does not try to show that they are linked to each other. Lesser is skillfully portrayed as a self-satisfied, pedantic zealot whose undeniable spirit and courage are at the service of his book, but not available to any human being, including himself. He is quite unlike the hero of Malamud's earlier treatment of this theme, the short story "Black Is My Favorite Color," in which an affectionate middle-aged Jewish shopkeeper is tragically prevented from marrying a black woman with whom he falls in love. Willie Spearmint has been well observed and listened to, and carefully assembled, but Malamud does not pretend that he knows his thoughts, and does not try to put him through the sort of spiritual metamorphosis that Frank Alpine undergoes.

But if he does not dare to reconcile his antagonists with each other, Malamud has an intuitive conviction of their essential brotherhood which is too powerful to be denied, even if he can testify to it only in painfully contorted form. In a weird fantasy, of the kind characteristic of Malamud's work but even more prominent in this novel, Lesser dreams of a grotesque union, in the form of a double marriage, between members of the two races, so that "Ishmael and Israel" are joined. Willie and Lesser too are united, in spite of their enmity, in a thoroughly equivocal scene, more hallucination than actuality, where the two lock themselves together in a bloody climax of mutual destruction, so that Lesser thinks, "each feels the anguish of the other." This event does not take place in reality, but in a graffiti-jungle drawn on the walls of one of the empty apartments, some wanderer's fantasy-world, which the two enemies have somehow entered to act out the last stage of their hatred for each other.

This fight is not the end of the story, for the story has no end. *The Tenants*, in common with a noticeable trend in recent criticism, exhibits a preoccupation with the problem of endings, with the fitness and possibility of resolution. Lesser's great effort is finishing a novel to which he has devoted ten years; it is called *The Promised End*, yet he is unable to find a conclusion for it, and his plight makes him reflect that "Some endings demand you trick the Sphinx." The end we need is that of Malamud's book rather than Lesser's, for it would deliver us from the riddle of the racial hatred it portrays.

BUT Malamud acknowledges that he does not know how to trick the Sphinx. In place of an unimaginable conclusion, *The Tenants* resorts to the sort of thrust into reality that is typical of modern art, an experimental attempt to

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weld the fictional world and actuality. Twice Malamud ordains that his book should close by writing "The End," but the emotions generated by the conflict resist his will, and continue beyond the limits he has set. *The Tenants* is the first of Malamud's novels to employ postmodern techniques of the kind attributable to the influence of Joyce, Gide, Kafka, and experimental poetry. The narrative is sometimes broken by scraps of Willie's writing salvaged from the garbage, and by visions that drift in space as much as in the characters' minds, and it ends—or rather, fails to end—with the repetition of the word "mercy" for fourteen solid lines. This word is spoken by the landlord who, it suddenly appears, has become the authentic victim of the conflict between Willie and Lesser. He has been asking for mercy all along, and now, witnessing their final combat, he asks for it again, endlessly, until his cry fills the page, and, we assume, goes beyond it, into extensional reality. The repeated word has the appearance of a concrete poem. It is not fiction, nor even language, it is merely typography. It originates in anguish, but it ends by taking us out of the novelistic world into the cold, neutral realm of inexpressive fact.

This emergence can be recognized as an appalling confession on Malamud's part that a resolution to the hatreds between Willie and Lesser is inconceivable, that the passions he has been depicting have escaped novelistic control and erupted out of their fictional framework, paralyzing the imagination. The story prepares us for this rivalry between art and reality through some meditations Lesser has about a painting left unfinished by a dead friend. The trouble was, he thinks, that the painter was defeated by the reality of the woman who sat as his model —"had he been unable to separate the woman from who she really was: she had as self got the better of his art? He could not invent beyond her? . . . I can't give you more than I have given you—make you more than you are—because I haven't presently got it to give. . . ." Willie, too, maintains that reality is superior to art when he replies to one of Lesser's lectures on the necessity of form by saying, "Art can kiss my juicy ass. You want to know what's really art? *I* am art. Willie Spearmint, *black man.*"

ANOTHER aspect of the meaning of the last page is suggested by Lesser's account of the novel he is working on. It is about a writer who, feeling unable to love, writes about a character who can, with the hope that the imaginative evocation of what he lacks may enable him to possess it in reality. Lesser too is engaged in this process of self-creation in his book: "Thus Lesser writes his book and his book writes Lesser." *The Tenants* itself is the outer instance of this concentric series of symbiotic relationships between book and writer; it is Malamud's effort to teach himself an understanding of the racial conflict, and the fading-out of his novel is an exposure of his failure and despair. The repetition of "mercy" is foreshadowed in one of Willie Spearmint's documents. At a time when he is frustrated in his writing, Willie produces a concrete poem in which the word "black" grows while the word "white" gradually disappears, until "BLACKNESS" is endlessly repeated, and the directions say, "This is the rest of the book." Like Willie, Malamud is driven by his anguish out of craftsmanship and into the poverty of mere verbal gesture. The result is crushingly effective, for "mercy" is not only the landlord's cry and Malamud's cry, but leaves the pages of the book altogether and hangs in the air, becoming a supplication addressed to the universe in general.

The Cold War Revisited

THE RIVALS: AMERICA AND RUSSIA SINCE WORLD WAR II. By ADAM B. ULAM. *Viking. 405 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by MAURICE FRIEDBERG

PERSEVERANCE must surely rank high among the scholarly virtues that in recent years have fallen into disrepute. While no particular audacity is required to take on historical sacred cows (do any remain?), much courage is needed to stand in defense of theories that are no longer chic. Among diplomatic historians, then, Adam B. Ulam of Harvard is a man of scholarly valor, a true nonconformist who steadfastly defends a number of propositions that are currently unfashionable and does so, moreover, with rare grace and skill. In the process, he effectively debunks a major article of faith of the "revisionist" creed in present-day historiography, namely the insistence that in the wake of World War II it was America, rather than the USSR, that brought upon the world the rigors of the cold war.

Ulam makes good use of the irony that "revisionist" attempts to exonerate Stalin of responsibility have come at a time when newly published *Soviet* documents provide additional evidence in support of the traditional Western view of Stalinism as an evil and a menace, and he delights in demolishing the more inept revisionists with a biting sarcasm heavily armored with documentary evidence. Thus, for example, he dismisses the currently voguish thesis that the real reason for America's decision to drop an atom bomb on Japan was not eagerness to defeat the Japanese, but rather a desire to intimidate and wrest important concessions from the USSR: "As a matter of fact, what *is* astounding is that *no* attempt was made by the United States to exploit politically the monopoly of this weapon. . . . *Even Soviet sources* . . . do not accuse the United States of threatening the Soviet Union in 1945" (italics in the original). And he reminds us that "the only person of note who in 1945-47 declared that the Russians should behave or otherwise a bomb should be delivered squarely on the Kremlin was Bertrand Russell," a useful bit of information to those who know Russell only as an organizer of anti-American "juridical" extravaganzas.

All this is not to imply that Ulam's book is essentially a straightforward defense of America's foreign policy in the last twenty-five years. On the contrary,

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Ulam is a vociferous critic not only of individual actions or even policies of the United States but, more fundamentally, of their overall thrust, style, and ideological underpinnings. Interwoven with his systematic exposition of events since the latter stages of the war are Ulam's repeated and hard-hitting strictures on what he considers the twin demons of American policy-making: emotionalism and rhetoric.

Thus, while the war was still in progress, "in regard to Japan, much more than Germany, American policy was prompted by vindictiveness and impatience. Japan had struck the treacherous blow at Pearl Harbor. . . .Hostility against the Japanese was fed by stories of atrocities. . . ." As the war dwindled, "Western statesmen, like the public in general, were overcompensating for a previous low opinion of Russia's fighting potential and the cohesion of her political system. . . .Yet, as the previous prophecies of the doom of Communism had been vastly exaggerated, so now the appraisals of monolithic unity of the peoples of the USSR and their devotion to Stalin were excessive." (That Westerners were not alone in their initial skepticism regarding Russia's chances for survival in the early stages of the war was attested by some memoirs recently published in the USSR. According to these, soon after Germany's attack Stalin had what was probably a nervous breakdown and could not carry on with his normal duties.)

In Ulam's estimate, feelings of guilt over having refused to join the League of Nations contributed significantly to the zeal with which the United States pressed for the establishment of the United Nations, its readiness to make various concessions to the USSR in spite of the fact that the Soviet Union anyway had much to gain from joining the new organization, and its ill-defined but fervent assumption that membership in a civilizing international body would somehow mellow the Soviet Union —as well as that crafty old imperialist, Great Britain. On the other hand, there was the position of *tout comprendre, tout pardonner*: "It was, after all, part of the American creed, now reinforced by the assimilation of Freudian psychology, that personal wickedness could in most cases be attributed to an unhappy and insecure childhood." One early beneficiary of America's understanding attitude toward persons with traumatic boyhoods was that occasionally obstinate and unreasonable ally, Joseph Stalin.

In Ulam's opinion, emotionalism, moralism, and rhetoric are responsible for some of the worst blunders of American policy. Like other mental afflictions, they are found along all points of the political spectrum and are not restricted to either the Left or the Right. And so, at a time when the defeat of Nazi Germany and her Japanese allies was already assured, many influential Americans were apprehensive lest victory result in the rebirth of the British, French, and Dutch colonial empires temporarily dismantled by the Axis. A perfectly justifiable concern in itself, this was nevertheless somewhat puzzling since the same Americans voiced no political or moral objections to the Soviet Union's emergence as a new colonial power; the USSR at the time was not only extending its sphere of influence, but also openly annexing territories that had belonged previously both to defeated powers (Germany and Japan) and to Russia's and America's allies. Ulam comments on this incongruous double standard:

> A strange masochistic streak in the American political mind has often subjected countries closest to the United States in political tradition and interest to the most suspicious scrutiny by public opinion and the most rigorous pressure by American public officials to be more virtuous in their foreign policies. . . . Yet while other Western nations were supposed to emulate and even surpass American anti-colonial-

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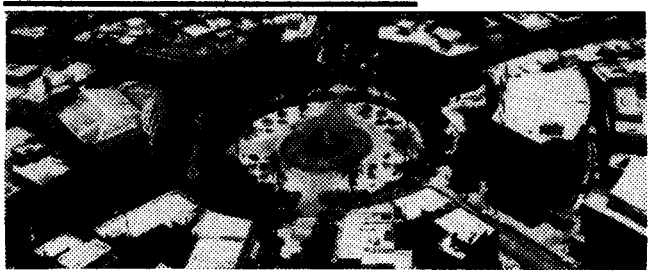

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ism, no such selfless position was expected of *non-democratic* allies of the United States, in this case the Soviet Union.

Ironically, the one colony the British never yielded, Hong Kong, was to emerge later as one of Communist China's most prized neighbors, her "window to the West," a center of banking and commerce during the period of mainland China's isolation from the non-Communist world. Nevertheless, obsession with the sin of colonialism persisted. As late as 1956, America's behavior during the Suez crisis demonstrated that "one word, 'imperialism,' was sufficient to throw the whole course of American foreign policy into disarray, would make Washington forsake and chastise her closest allies."

The ponderously moralizing tone so often favored by American statesmen in their public pronouncements, the stubborn insistence that American policy is determined by our devotion to liberty, justice, and democracy rather than enlightened self-interest, is usually associated with the person of John Foster Dulles. Yet it was Dean Acheson who set the tone some years earlier, and it is he who must be blamed for the reaction a generation later: "Some of those who were children when Acheson spoke grew up to discover that America's policies were not in every case devoted to preservation of virtue and democracy. They were then tempted to conclude that *all* American policies were based on deception, that the society that permitted them must be corrupt." A "moralistic" posture encourages thinking in moral categories, and in a "moral" view of the world, necessary compromises become despicable deals with the principle of evil incarnate, and the failure to achieve desired goals assumes the quasi-religious dimensions of a fall from grace. Predictably, such a "moral" failure stirs up a wave of "moral" indignation. And thus, in the aftermath of World War II:

> When it soon became obvious that the peace settlement was both imperfect and precarious, the public inquest addressed itself to the question: Who is guilty? It was very easy to answer by attributing moral depravity and evil designs to the rulers of the Soviet Union. . . . Then the inquiry shifted inevitably to the American scene and asked: Who betrayed? . . . The United States, then, with its idealism in world affairs, was confronted with the bad will of its partners, primarily the Soviet Union, its policies constantly frustrated or betrayed not through the incompetence or unrealism of their executors, but because of their Communist leanings or ties.

Ulam makes no extravagant claims as to what might have been accomplished (or even simply averted) had postwar American diplomacy been more effective. In Eastern Europe, for instance, he suggests that countries that are now Soviet satellites might conceivably have been allowed to enjoy the status held by Finland, while remaining within the sphere of Soviet influence. (Yet even this, he concedes, could have been achieved only if the USSR in 1945 had been more tolerant and far-sighted—a dubious proposition for a Communist state flushed with victory and ruled by a Stalin.) He makes a strong case for the hypothesis that a realistic policy, stripped of moralizing pretensions, might have prevented, or at least minimized, the abrasive atmosphere of recriminations and suspicion that swept the country in the aftermath of World War II and, again, in recent years. Ulam uses Dean Rusk's January 1966 pronouncement to illustrate his point. Defending this country's assistance to South Vietnam, the then Secretary of State declared that the United States would support "Free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Instead, Ulam suggests:

> Had Rusk propounded the view that the United States was supporting one authoritarian regime against another because (1) it was in the interest of the United States to do so, and (2) authoritarian though the South Vietnamese government was, it was still less oppressive than the Communist alternative to it, such a public acknowledgment would have been decried as the height of cynicism. Yet it is lack of realism which begets cynicism, which in turn feeds masochistic disillusionment and defeatism. It is strange logic indeed to argue that if it cannot be clearly demonstrated that American policies *everywhere* are engaged on behalf of democracy, then it must follow that United States foreign policies have been consistently imperialistic, and most of the regimes helped or sponsored by the United States have been reactionary dictatorships or oligarchies.

Thus, the emotionalism and rhetoric of the official view, based on the doctrine of American goodness, finds its mirror-perfect image in the exactly contrary view, based on the doctrine of American evil, held by the "revisionist" historians. In its scathing treatment of both camps, *The Rivals* is a stimulating and provocative work, forcefully argued and thoroughly documented. Ulam's theses are scarcely likely to be accorded the honor of universal agreement, but they cannot be lightly dismissed or easily refuted.

The Flying Couch

The End of the Modern Age. By Allen Wheelis. *Basic Books. 129 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by Alan Goldfein

Once upon a time there was a man who wrote fantasies and parables and meditations that sometimes started once upon a time. These tales were about losers of illusion, confronters of death, escapists from necessity, and seekers of the wonders of creation, and they were brewed of desperation and hope in unpredictable measures. And these measures were unpredictable on purpose. There was humor, too, in these tales, and freshness in their language; and upon reading them, one could not but come away with the reassuring feeling that the human condition was an adventure, even if it did not turn out perfectly happily for everybody concerned. The man who wrote these fantasies was a psychoanalyst, and he wrote admirable professional essays and books, too,

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Alan Goldfein's *story, "Custom and Costume," appeared in our October 1971 number.*

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in which he argued that man is not an object or a machine to be coldly analyzed as if he were a packaged product of the past; in which he argued that there are always choices to be made; that, in short, man can transcend himself. Then, in a book called *The End of the Modern Age,* the psychoanalyst and parabolist turned to society at large, and over-transcended himself.

The man is Allen Wheelis. And his most recent book is both a message and a prayer. The message is that: "The age is ending, the house is coming down—all the rafters, all the towers, all the clocks. It was built of a dream. The dream closes." The age was of mechanism. The house was built on the foundations of scientific certainty. The dream was that mankind could know all truth and control the world. Wheelis does not apocalyptically proclaim the Western mind dead. Only confused. It has been sucked in by the "false credentials" of a world view which assigns the knower to a *specula positis* seat outside the arena of battle, and thereby deludes him into imagining that he can understand all, unaware that the all includes the knower. Unaware that the knower will change the all, of which he is a member, every time he attempts to observe it. It makes him a party to the old infinite mirror-game of examining the image of oneself in the process of examining the image of oneself, etc., etc.

And this knower is *us*—not man in the past, alone. Were it not us, Wheelis would not have bothered to write this book, for he is not a historian. He is, at heart, a healer of men's minds; and here the disease he finds is hubris. We speak in terms of conquest, exploitation, victory when it comes to nature; we imagine that we will be able, even, to predict the future: "Mechanism . . . [has] become our reality, life itself our dream." Wheelis's prayer is that we become more modest about what we know, and therefore about how we direct our powerful technology; his plea is toward a reorientation of values, toward living:

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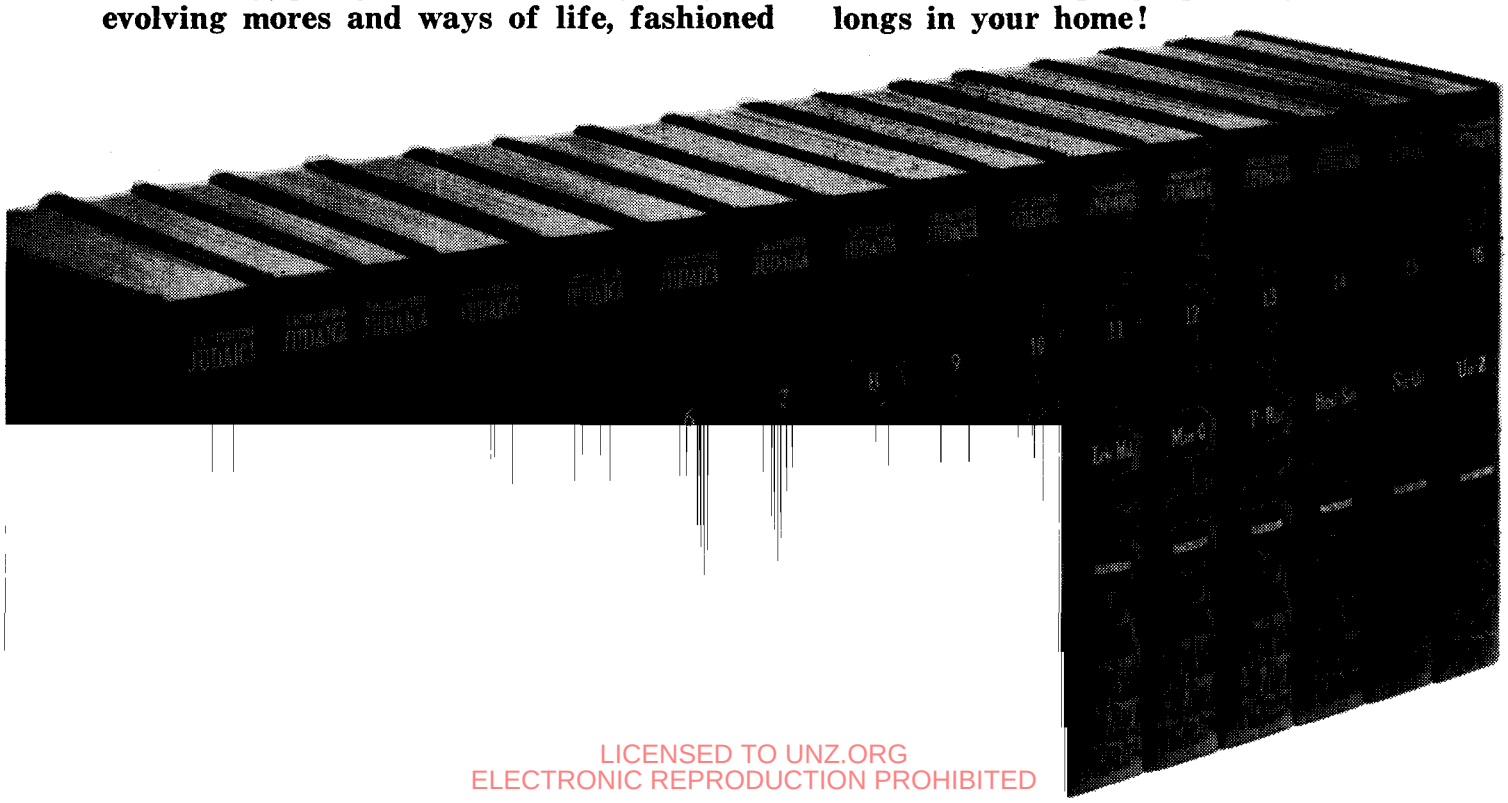

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much? Should I love my neighbor, concern myself with his suffering? How far does neighborhood extend? To the Coast? To North Vietnam? Shall I accept violence and murder as necessary to man's life and arm myself accordingly, or shall I declare them elective and work for their elimination?

Neither the message nor the prayer is particularly new (they were made, in fact, by Wheelis, in his earlier work, *The Quest for Identity*), though they are certainly more worth hearing now than ever. What is important about Wheelis's endeavor is that while it describes a state of mind that is about to come tumbling down, that indeed he hopes will soon crumble to dust, it does so not as an adversary of reason, or of logic, or of science, but as an advocate, or a defender, of them. Wheelis is hoping to salvage civilization by calling for a humble recognition of the presence of wonder and mystery; and, in this way, for a more *reasonable* approach to "truth." So that "though we may no longer be drunk on her kisses, we still may be exalted by her perfume."

SOME years ago, the French historian of medieval philosophy Etienne Gilson described how the doctrine of the twofold truth of the Latin Avoerrists had driven a wedge between reason and revelation in the late Middle Ages; a wedge which was lamentably never removed. A few years before, the great American historian of the Enlightenment, Carl Becker, had pointed out that the Heavenly City of the 18th-century philosophers, though based on science and natural law, was as much belief in a revealed truth as the Holy Faith had been. In flight from the religious constraint embodied in "revealed truth," reason had become a religion itself, armored in the same absolutist metal that had once constrained it. Now Wheelis, in a work which resembles these in tone (and this is a compliment) —though it is less erudite and is more concerned with the present than the past—would like to extract that seven-hundred-year-old wedge. This is the major significance of *The End of the Modern Age*.

But when one engages in an exhortation of uncertainty, and then calls for an exaltation of it, he risks floating off into a nether realm where toes no longer touch ground and where heads fog within the clouds. Once he has stated that he is in favor of a more subjective truth, Wheelis has great difficulty locating the right degree of subjectivity. At one moment he is admiring Karl Popper ("Now here is a Machiavelli of knowing!") who would approach truth by the back door, exposing all falsehoods, and at another, he is washing his hands of the whole deal, proclaiming that we would all be better off in church, and that "the church might better be a forest glade." Wheelis is really working at a union which—as one of his earlier parables, "The Illusionless Man and the Visionary Maid," showed—is not easy to maintain. Yet it is his commitment to make the marriage stick that is both the major strength and weakness of this book.

The other problem with *The End of the Modern Age* is that it attempts too much in too little space with too few tools. Wheelis is very talented, but he is, after all, a psychoanalyst, and not a historian of ideas, or a historian of science. To take on the past four hundred years means that he must trace the unwindings of the dream of mechanism: its materialization in the visions of Copernicus, its support by Galileo, its rationalization by Descartes, its triumph with Newton, its socialization by Adam Smith, and its institutionalization by the raptures of 19th-century science. It means that unless he can trace this dream with historical understanding, his criticism of it will not be fair. But the history is summary, and worse, it is a summary of the conclusions of other people—Lewis Mumford, Carl Becker, Johann Huizinga, J. S. Bury, Arthur Koestler, Jacob Bronowski, and Bruce Mazlish. Even most of the quotations (which are considerable) from Copernicus, Descartes, Voltaire, Newton, Laplace, Kepler, and others, come from secondary sources. I do not mean to pick and jab in graduate-school-seminar paper fashion, but there is a reason for a writer to show that he is in touch with his material. When Wheelis, for example, makes a crucial point about Newton, we are entitled, I think, to some sort of bibliographical assurance that Newton is being quoted directly. But there is no mention of either the *Principia* or any other primary source in the bibliography.

The intrinsic historical fault, however, lies in Wheelis's method, which is a-historical. Wheelis has been an enemy of mechanism and determinism in the philosophy and practice of psychoanalysis for a long time. He has been a champion of human soul and will, and for this he deserves not a little applause. But in this essay he has confused the micro-world of the individual with the macro-world of society. In psychology a mechanistic approach to causation yields the inevitability of why the patient is the way he is, and why he could be no other, and thus precludes the possibility of his being helped to change. But in intellectual history (or in *any* history) the search for causation may well be able to convince us that, if anything, inevitability is a phantom. Wheelis is so vehement and unrelenting in his attack that he brushes past what could have been a powerful ally, and even hinders it. In his emphasis on living life now, he turns against causation entirely. And so, when he turns to history, he neglects the social and economic settings in which mechanism was nurtured, as well as the ones in which it has started upon its process of decay. He proclaims a healthy relativism as an antidote to the smugness that issues from certainty, and then says that "we have come a long way on false credentials"—a mighty sure and certain statement itself. A touch more of historical perspective might have allowed him to see that these credentials are only recently false.

The irony is that, while his psychoanalytic view is open-ended, relying upon change, his historical one is closed and static: mechanism is *always* false, and always has been. But, after all, if we are to accept truth as a matter of subjectivity, as a question of degree, as a matter of its being right for its time and place, then surely the

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world view of the 18th-century philosophers, which relied upon natural law—which, in its time, called forth the Rights of Man, the principles of political democracy and international diplomacy—was subjectively true, or *right*; even granted that it was mechanistic. One cannot just label the Enlightenment false. When Wheelis denies dogmatically the credentials of mechanistic certainty, he denies its development as well. Which means that he rejects the rational tradition itself, even though he does not want to; even though there is a strong part of him which wants to retain it. He commits the same error against which he is pleading. It is this which causes him to dart back and forth between rationality and faith. Wheelis's is the error of the fallacy of composition: that the whole equals the sum of its parts. It is, ironically, the reverse of the mistake of the Descartian reductivists upon whom he lays so much of the blame for mechanism. It would even be possible to attack him with the same arguments that he uses, for if he has shown by rational argument that the only certainty is uncertainty, then the next step would be to proclaim (as many already have) that uncertainty is uncertain as well.

Allen Wheelis is brilliant at portraying and peopling paradox, at bringing us into the picture ourselves so that we roll and tumble around in both the absurdity and the majesty of the existential condition. We are moved because style and message are in harmony. When Wheelis speaks of the wonder and mystery alive in the world, he does not simply *tell* us about it, he evokes it through his language. We experience "the green leaves, the taste of strawberry, . . . the haze of the hills in October, the feel of a girl's mouth."

But, at bottom, when one falls outside the house of mirrored hopes and horrors, when one closes the pages of this brief book, one sees that the scheme was a bit too abstract, the creation of the picture of absurdity no less perfect and isolate than the mechanistic enemy itself. That enemy—whether it be called mechanism or certainty—is today as powerful and dangerous as it is difficult to dislodge; and its replacement, uncertainty, is just as difficult to describe. So to say that *The End of the Modern Age* rests between success and failure in the same way that its author rests between illusionlessness and vision is neither a harsh nor a destructive judgment. It explains why Wheelis is, at best (or worst!), a borderline—or occasional—apocalyptic, and it allows us to be thankful that at least he does not yield himself up unconditionally to what might be called (in today's intellectual world of Skinners and Reichs) the certainty temptation: of leaping tearfully onto the downy pillows of faith, or clinging desperately to the welded metal of the machine.

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Reviewed by ISA KAPP

WHEN it comes to sex, it makes a difference whose hands you are in, yet the democratization of sexual ambition has made us more and more promiscuous in the choice of our literary guides. As if we were shopping in one of those indoor arcades that lead without notice from Saks Fifth Avenue to Woolworth, we move, glazed, from the smug didacticism of Dr. Reuben to the garish confidences of "J." What we are looking for is a commodity we have come to regard as our inalienable right: rapture.

The rules of love-making, according to the *Kama Sutra*, "apply so long as the passion of the man is middling." In the pages of our current "how-to-do-it" sex books, we are permanently tagged as "middling" (or worse, low-to-middling) in assets, aptitudes, even in desire—unmistakable members of an erotic as well as an economic middle class. There is no apprehension that (to quote again from the *Kama Sutra*) the modern "loving pair will become blind with passion . . . and go on with great impetuosity, paying not the least regard to excess," but, on the contrary, that we will prove rag dolls in our beds, slackers on the job. Our canny authors have tempered rapture itself to middle-class aspirations—successful competition, raising the GNP, acquiring skills, making a good investment; and they speak to us in the pragmatic cadences of the business community.

The author of *The Sensuous Woman*, for example, tells us that she led a wretched sex life until the moment in Gimbels bargain basement (an appropriate setting) she figured out her own "sensuality program." Assuring us that sensuality helped her friend Sue "get her dream man and it helps her to hold on to him," she urges us to efforts that range wildly from stroking velvet pin-cushions to perfecting oral embellishments like the "silken swirl."

Playing both ends against the prurient middle, *The Sensuous Woman* romps breezily through all the extensions of basic sex once attributed to the heroes and heroines of pornography. Yet the author herself appears on TV programs, homespun, well-bred, and evangelistic, girlishly revealing that her mother keeps her book in a yellow towel in the linen closet.

It has been said that the Dutch gynecologist Van de Velde was (in *Ideal Marriage*) the perfect spokesman for his contemporaries, the post-Victorian victims of Victorian repression, because his language neither repelled nor alarmed them. Perhaps the same propensity for dispelling alarm makes Dr. Reuben so much the sex instructor for our time and our ever-expanding middle class. His vocabulary, steering between the space agency, the corporation conference, and the Sunday supplement, will have a familiar ring in many places: "According to the chromosomal decisions made at the

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ISA KAPP, *whose reviews and essays have appeared in* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals, is currently working on a book about manners and morals, to be called* Love Among the Middle Classes.

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microsecond of conception, the tiny being may evolve one day into either a topless dancer or a well-muscled lifeguard.... Likewise the future lifeguard has, potentially, all the pelvic endowments of the bikini-clad lovelies who will one day swarm around him."

This blunt and matter-of-fact gentleman is not capable, apparently, of embarrassment or even astonishment at sexual extremity. Whatever he surveys—prostitution, venereal disease, unreliable birth-control methods, or pornography—he remains imperturbable, giving undismayed answers like, "Pornography simply represents people as they really are. . . . Everybody has genitals and everybody uses them, one way or another." Rarely does he give way to exasperation, except in the case of premature ejaculators (backsliders?) and homosexuals (just not regular fellows?). But most oddity of organ or disposition he takes for granted, and it may be this very lack of squeamishness or delicacy that makes him so acceptable to thousands of readers. Discovering that the most avid readers of his first book were women, Dr. Reuben deliberately addressed his second volume, *Any Woman Can!*, to a female audience. In the new book he shrewdly combines a touch of old-fashioned paternalism with a flagrant appeal to the self-assertiveness and pride in sexual role fired by the Women's Liberation movement. "Then sex is all right?" asks the last chapter of *Any Woman Can!* The sex books are here to tell us, after centuries of repression, that it is more than all right: it is wholesome, sanitary, and absolutely essential.

It is probably this message, rather than youthful voluptuousness (these books are also on college best-seller lists) or middle-aged sybaritism, that sends Americans in droves to such crude manuals. I would guess that whatever sense of freedom we have acquired since D. H. Lawrence wrote *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is largely theoretical, a matter of principle. In fact, the prohibitions of our ancestors—Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant—are still in our limbs though gone from our opinions. Rabbi Emanuel Rackman observed recently in

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a newspaper column that Jewish law (the *halakhah*) has never equated sexuality with a fall from grace, but has indeed encouraged men to be good lovers and women to be seductive. Nevertheless, I would have to testify from my own background in the middle-class Jewish community of the Bronx, that the young Jewish male (whatever his future potential) did not start out on comfortable terms with his physical self. Whether this was due to the strains of immigrant adaptation or to that familial intrusiveness so picturesquely inveighed against in Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, "inhibited" was a familiar word in those surroundings. The abstract sexual libertarian was often totally innocent of the physical availability of girls he sermonized but had scant actual contact with. So it is no surprise that several decades later our children (and we ourselves) are still not easy about sex. Our own backwardness and vulnerability are what the present avalanche of guidebooks exploits, and they put the bullying edge into Dr. Reuben's camp-director voice.

In his books, and in *The Sensuous Woman*, our physical self comes into view in such a detailed, blatant, life-like way that beside them even the *Kama Sutra*, with its elaborate inventory of substances (betel leaves, unguents, fragrances, aphrodisiacs) and positions of congress (the mare's, the crab's, the lotus-like, the splitting of the bamboo) seems incredibly quaint and ritualistic. Both "J" and Reuben are plain-spoken and highly enthusiastic about positions of congress ("J" cannot find it in her heart or taste to exclude any), and regret that most of us are too timid for real pleasure or abandon, unless we take permission from someone with the voice of authority.

It is our comic predicament that although sex frequently involves some of our most exquisite and exalted emotions, the only authorities we can summon up are doctors and prostitutes, both in their way limited in outlook. Thus the most authentic aspect of a rather grim sadistic movie, *Klute*, is the tape of Jane Fonda's voice as she enacts a call-girl hypnotically assuring her client that nothing is wrong or impermissible. And *Carnal Knowledge* ends with the whore as creator, recovering for the impotent man the masculine identity of which society has deprived him. Dr. Masters and Mrs. Johnson embarked on their "medical" research leaning heavily on the authority of another ancient profession which they judged, by virtue of its repeated success under relatively adverse conditions, to be the most reliable source for effective behavior.

BUT we have to face the fact that our authorities do not really agree, even on those crucial matters that lie like albatrosses on the current erotic imagination: masturbation and orgasm. Though Reuben, "J," and Masters and Johnson accept the former as a logical usher into fulfillment, Havelock Ellis regards it as almost a guarantee of subsequent frigidity. When Dr. Reuben is queried, "Can't some women just enjoy sex without reaching a climax?" he flatly replies: "Some women tell it that way, but 'enjoying' sex without orgasm is about as satisfying as 'enjoying' a nice dinner without swallowing it." Yet Dr. Melvin Anchell, fighting a lone battle against "sexperts" and permissiveness, insists in *Sex and Sanity* that the average woman has only one or two orgasms a month and the rest of the time she "must derive her pleasure from affectionate feelings related to loving and pleasing her husband." More counterrevolutionary still is psychiatrist Leslie H. Farber's challenge: "As far as I know, little attention was paid to the female orgasm before the era of sexology. Where did the sexologists find it? Did they discover it or invent it?"

And even on the subject of losing our inhibitions, where one might expect a possible harmony of interest, we cannot be sure that our popular "authorities" have even approached the complicated truth. According to the Belgian psychologist, Francois Duyckaerts (in his book, *The Sexual Bond*), our inhibitions are not so much imposed on us from without, by church, society, and family, as by intricate knots of resistance within ourselves. He believes that humans, like other animals, have strong residues of fear and aggression toward any stranger, even one who will become a mate, because he is an intruder into private territory and in some way threatens our old narcissistic habits. "The human body," writes Duyckaerts, "like an instrument of extreme perfection, is sensitive to the slightest latent tendencies, the most insignificant twinges of the unconscious, the most fleeting emotions and even the most hidden unavowed reluctance in the mind." Genuine surrender to another person is, he speculates, not a matter of proficiency or conscious decision, but the plucking up of courage, "the general pliability of the psyche."

But setting aside the degree of our confidence in one authority or another, the question that remains is: Can we ever take permission for our most personal wishes from books? Or does permission (as well as encouragement) have to reside in the person next to us? Can "how to drive a man to ecstasy" be a calculated program of varied costumes and embraces, or are we roused to sexual feeling by incalculables beyond the reach of "J"'s manicured grasp?

On this obscure and fascinating ground, the sex manuals cannot even hope to tread. But even on their own plain level, they may lead us to an unexpected impasse. For one thing, they are far too democratic and optimistic. In love as in politics, there is a natural elite; that is to say, we are not all sensuous women to the same extent, and harsh though it may seem to say so, some of us may not be sensuous women at all. But let us suppose, on the contrary, as "J" claims all manner of women have been testifying, that her book really "works," and that the modern middle-class lady, instead of taking a few cautious steps in the direction of pleasure, will with one rip of the seven veils leap directly from Puritanism to co-equality with the most experienced of courtesans. What a frightening backlash there may be! The avid readers who have learned to undulate and whisper provocative obscenities into their lovers' ears may

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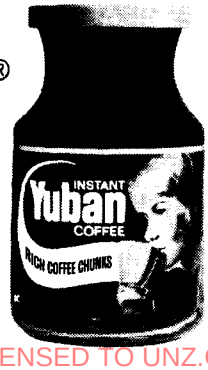

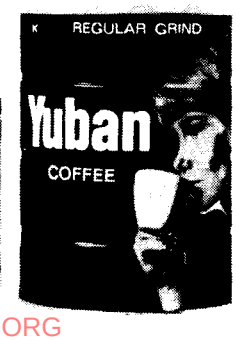

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find themselves high and dry, as men search in despair for a shy and innocent girl who does not know anything. Only give us a few years of uniform skill, and we will look back to our awkward and inhibited past as the period of true romance.

But having indicated some of the ways in which how-to-do-it sex books are paltry, inept, small-minded, and unusable by most of us, I want to leave a small opening to the opposing view that, although at their best they may not be able to help us much, at their worst their enterprise and salaciousness cannot harm us. At least they cannot harm us as much as their opposites, indifference and rigidity. There are, after all, at least two kinds of people in the world, the high-pitched ones who need stability and reassurance from without, and the low-slung, who need to be stimulated and jogged from their inertia. In some sense a practical handbook like *Everything You Always Wanted to Know* ministers to both, and whatever its aesthetic deficiencies, it contains an undeniable supply of common sense. It would take a kind of vaingloriousness not to profit from some of its homely injunctions. Which of us is in a position to contend, for example, that women could not be better than they are after a severe regimen of vaginal muscle exercises that it (like many another sex book) recommends?

No doubt it would be ideal if carnal knowledge could flourish within us like a seed beneath the snow, ready to blossom in the proper season. In the work of Havelock Ellis, that pioneer whose interest in sex was far from petty or parochial, there is explicit recognition of the fact that life does not always proceed in this way. He addresses himself in *Life and Sex* to the plight of a not atypical woman, often intelligent and sociable, who preserves long after marriage and motherhood the emotional confines of virginity. Her husband has loved her.

> according to his imperfect knowledge, but he has never so much as realized that his knowledge was imperfect. She on her side loves her husband; she comes in time to have a sort of tender maternal feeling for him. Possibly she feels a little pleasure in intercourse with him. But she has never once been profoundly aroused, and she has never once been utterly satisfied. The deep fountains of her nature have never been unsealed . . . her erotic personality has never been developed.

For Ellis the situation was no light matter, but a prelude to acute unhappiness and sometimes domestic tragedy. Of course he wrote that in 1921, but on the probability that our language and our pretensions are more amenable to change than our essential dispositions, perhaps we ought to tolerate in 1972 a touch of coarseness, and permit David Reuben to say that a woman "at least has the right to fully enjoy the pleasures that are available to the family dog and cat. It she doesn't like her sexual existence the way it is, she can do something about it."

We have to remember, when their style or grammar goes against the grain, that American writers

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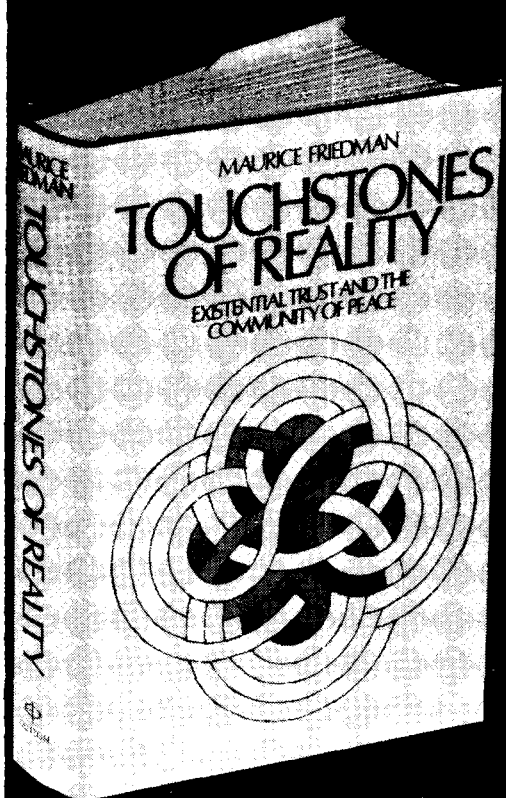

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simply do not seem able to combine realism with delicacy. Almost the best we can expect of them is the wholesome attitude, uncorrupted by coyness or sly ego considerations, that is mainly characteristic of physically oriented scientists like Masters and Johnson, who have a passion to know what goes on in the human body. Despite their intimidating paraphernalia for the study publicized in *Human Sexual Response* —instruments, cameras, tabulators —their dogged curiosity about what happens identically rather than eccentrically to people, during the complex and dramatic cycle of changes we have to undergo in the normal course of sexual pleasure and release, seems to me beneficent rather than mechanical. It is a manifestation of intellect no meaner and no less romantic than the curiosity that sent Ehrlich and Pasteur in pursuit of harmful but elusive germs. Focusing on the physiological, the animal in us, means coming closer to the organic and the universal, and that seems to lift American sex writing beyond the trivial and competitive materials of strictly social investigation.

But even should the level of the writing sink beyond redemption, and the tone dwindle to arrogance and presumption, I still believe we should be wary of our resistance if the reasons for it are purely aesthetic. By the same token we ought not to nurse the worry, perhaps also aesthetic, that sex books constitute what one writer called a "no-knock" invasion into our private life, a violation of our inner feelings. Intellectuals, at least, are already too hospitable to the notion that we are easily corruptible by the forces of mass culture. A few months ago, poet James Dickey dramatically inquired of a *Firing Line* TV audience whether they knew how many advertising messages they were daily exposed to. When Dickey revealed that the number was at least 50,000, William Buckley pertinently remarked, "That doesn't leave us much time for meditation."

Such time as we do have left will not, it seems to me, be profitably spent in protesting the vulgarities

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of the entertainment media, or of science and statistics. Though we may eventually civilize TV or at least strengthen our agility in tuning out, it does not look at present as if there will be any hiding place from science. The cancer ad urging a check-up tells us, "This woman is looking for trouble," and like her we will have, one way or another, to absorb those aspects of the truth that initially offend and dismay us. The only defense I can think of is to cultivate the opposite, complementary, aspects of ourselves: taste, imagination, and independence of prevailing convention, whether in shoe-styles or in sex. Perhaps one reason that the conservative outlook sometimes seems to be the most cheerful one on the political horizon is that it reflects an internal rather than an external inclination. Underneath our epidemic of sex anxiety, our comparisons, our yearning for and resentment of permission, lies a simple reservoir of consolation: that sex is the only art in which we can to a great extent legitimately "know what we like." The cultivation of personal taste and preference, a healthy confidence in our own intuition about the nature of pleasure, a firm respect for eccentricities that Masters and Johnson did not intend to photograph—will make us more gracious about accepting knowledge but neverthless stronger in rejecting the tyranny of experts.

Seven in One

POE POE POE POE POE POE POE. By DANIEL HOFFMAN. *Doubleday. 339 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL AARON

THE LONG-STANDING quarrel between Edgar Allan Poe's disparagers and adulators no longer hinges on his alleged moral and psychological infirmities. Industrious scholars have refuted the slanders and insinuations first broadcast by his literary executor, Rufus Griswold. Separating facts from gossip and invention, they have contested the portrait of the manic-depressed, impotent, necrophiliac, syphilitic dope fiend and translated the damned soul into the solid citizen. The Poe of current scholarly consensus seems to have little in common with the exotic and tormented "Edgarpoe" of the French cult—aristocrat and anti-utilitarian, despiser of steam-engines and democracy—who intoxicated a generation of poets after Baudelaire translated Poe's works ("When first I opened one of his books I saw with fear and delight not only themes of which I had dreamt but phrases which I had shaped in my mind and which he had written twenty years before").

Mr. Hoffman's multiple Poe resembles Baudelaire's spiritual brother and Paul Valéry's "demon of lucidity" more than he does the scrubbed Rotarian featured in Arthur Hobson Quinn's "definitive" biography (for Hoffman, Poe *is* presumably impotent and a necrophiliac of sorts), but he isn't concerned with the claims and counter-claims of the cultists and detects substantial amounts of fudge in the genius of his subject. The poet who perpetrated "walloping bloopers," "resounding clichés," "lines of tawdry vulgarity," he concedes, wasn't "always in as full control of his language" as he was of his vision. Hoffman concentrates on the explorer of the soul who in struggling to express the inexpressible or "to speak of certain truths at the dead center of his own psychic life," opened up (as one of Poe's contemporaries put it) "the black gulfs and charms of our spiritual nature." He affirms, against the denials of Henry James and T.S. Eliot, that Poe is both a serious and a coherent artist.

SINCE these notions are not strikingly original, why "still another book on Poe"? Because a recounting of his own rediscovery of Poe's deeper import, Hoffman says, might induce others who once put themselves "in the way of Poe's vision" but who discarded him along with other childish infatuations, to recognize "the

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DANIEL AARON *is professor of English at Harvard and the author of* Writers on the Left. *Mr. Aaron's study of American writers and the Civil War will be published next year by Knopf.*

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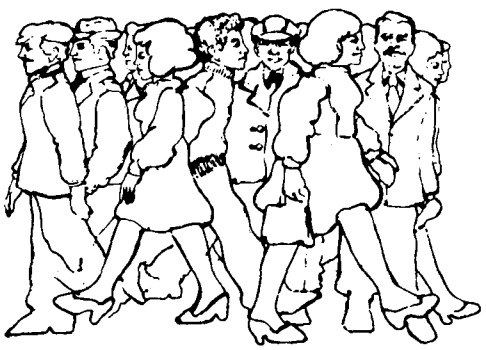
In and Out of the Melting Pot



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EDITED BY MILTON L. BARRON

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miraculous paradoxes of his art." He offers a new approach to Poe, part autobiography (the author's adventures while mapping the heart and intellect of Poe), part literary exegesis, by a scholar and poet thoroughly familiar with (and indebted to) the best Poe commentary. It is a recording of an intense literary experience, unmagisterial, confessedly personal ("Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe, the name resounded, soon becoming not a name at all, but a note, a tone struck upon some inward anvil of my being") and abounding with fresh perceptions.

THE incantatory title not only "resounds" like a note. It also suggests the histrionic poet of many masks: "Eddie Poe," the pitiful orphan boy and "son" of Mrs. Clemm; "Edgarpoe," a character out of Huysmans, lonely prisoner in Philistine America; "Analyst Poe," the ratiocinative genius who combines imagination and reason to solve the unsolvable; "Hoaxie Poe," whose letters from the moon, balloon voyages, and mesmerical revelations aren't put-ons but allegories of deadly serious intent; "Horror-haunted" or "Idgar Poe," tuned to the terrors from the subliminal self; "Disinherited aristocrat Poe," despising hoi polloi, bitter at the denial of his "proper prerogatives," yet solaced by the consciousness of his fancied royalty; "Funny Edgar" of the Grotesques, tiresomely comical and facetious; and "Edgar the Metaphysician," concocter of cosmogenic poems. These and other seemingly disparate poses are all interrelated and compose the single Poe "always about to explode into the pieces of his anguished and divided self" but unified by a single impulse.

Read as allegories of his unspoken thoughts, Poe's poems and tales and sketches coalesce into a single plot: the Poet-Narrator contrives all manner of stratagems to escape from materiality into ideality, from Time into Timelessness. In their efforts "to cross the barriers between the perceptible sensual world and that which lies beyond it" and seeking reabsorption into the original Unity, Poe's protagonists

> undertake hazardous voyages either into the stratosphere or to the moon; or by descending into dungeons and vaults in the earth; or down maelstroms in the sea toward the center of the very world. Others cross the bourne between our life and another by breaking through the barrier of silence and speaking from beyond the grave. Some achieve this posthumous eloquence as the result of a mesmerical suspension of mortality; some, consuming inordinate amounts of laudanum, take the trip on drugs. Still others have already arrived at the desired condition of immaterial existence and speak to one another, in "Colloquies" and "Conventions," as disembodied shades.

SOME YEARS ago Richard Wilbur published a brilliant essay mentioning the various means by which Poe's rootless adventurers catapulted themselves out of space and time, but Hoffman's interest in the theory of "reintegrative unification" (for Wilbur a primarily aesthetic and philosophical consideration) is finally if not exclusively psychoanalytic. Poe's uncontrollable desire to merge with the One and his contempt for the body, he thinks, spring from a common source. Beset by private terrors and wracked by "the endless war between conscience and impulse," Poe's exercises in symbolic action dramatize his yearning for, and fear of, reentering his mother's womb. Hoffman is no more beguiled than Marie Bonaparte, from whose relentlessly Freudian work on Poe he selectively borrows, by Poe's repressions and sublimations; they plainly reveal to him an "obsessive longing to be reborn in the womb." He sees as identical the dream of uterine bliss and that "primary unity toward which the soul tends, for which it agonizingly pines."

As psychoanalytical interpretations go, Hoffman's probe is more lucid and suggestive than most; for Hoffman, Poe is always a writer, never a "case." But his illustrative commentary and un-

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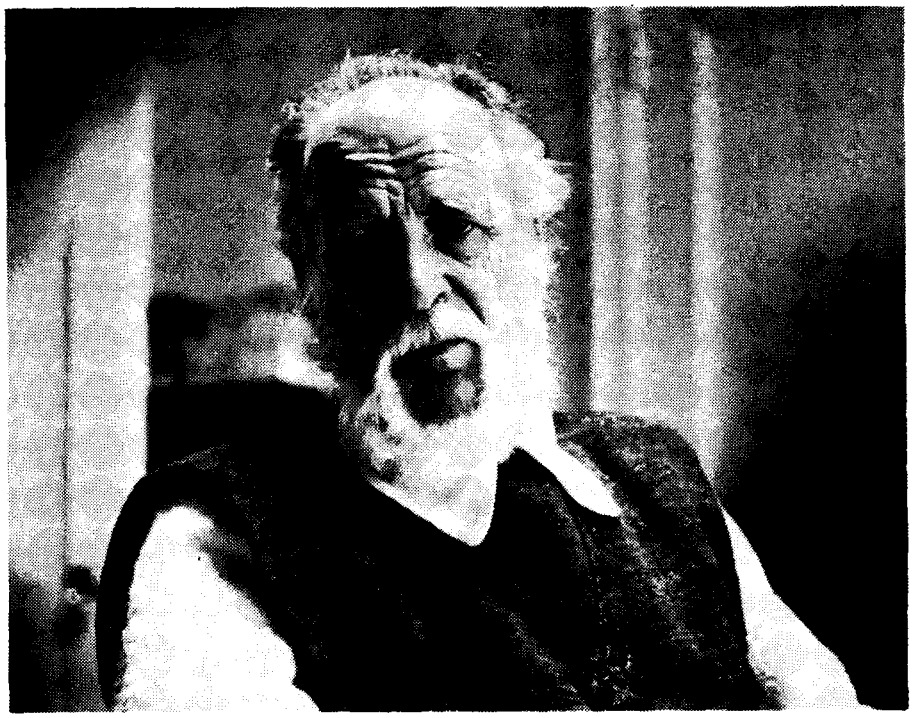
casual asides are more arresting than his thesis. Although his confidential manner can be arch and his autobiographical intrusions distracting (he is likely to be most academic when strenuously attempting not to be), he sustains his role of detective-critic or scholar-cryptographer cracking the code of cryptic Poe. No one to my knowledge has better analyzed particular poems and tales or examined more subtly Poe-Dupin's disentangling imagination (poetical, intuitive, mathematical), or defined more usefully the distinctions between Poe's terms, "grotesque" and "arabesque" ("a grotesque is a satire, an arabesque a prose equivalent of a poem"). His guess that the explanation for Poe's "anonymous and unfamilied heroes," studiedly vague about their ancestors, may have less to do with Poe's orphaned state than with his obsession to divest them of earthly materiality is buttressed by an apposite quotation from Porphyry's *On the Life of Plotinus*. Dr. Karl Menninger's *Man against Himself* furnishes him with an extended analogy between Houdini's pain-accompanied escapes and Poe's "horror-struck fantasies." Houdini's stunts and Poe's predicaments he likens to pseudo-suicides. "Such fantasies," he quotes from Menninger, "may be accompanied by a strong sense of guilt and there is a well-known (concomitant) conception of the womb, or entry into the womb, as being something terrible."

NOT all of Hoffman's claims for Poe entirely convince (was Poe really his own alienist? does the manipulation of symbolic objects and actions necessarily signify self-knowledge?), and the omission of that tomahawking critic, "Book-Reviewer Poe," among his various Poe personae is disappointing. But there aren't many good books on Poe, and this one, a work of devotion and a rebuke to snobbery, most decidedly is. It handsomely introduces the American Ariel "of no time and no place" (I quote from Walter de la Mare's fine essay) "who had hob-a-nobbed—a little too intimately for his own peace—with Caliban."



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